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CURRENT COMMENT.

PRESIDENT COOLIDGE's first action of general public interest since his elevation was his disposal of the case of Mr. Charles L. Craig, Comptroller of New York City; and in this matter he has managed so ineptly that there seems reason to doubt the reports of the President's superior political acumen. In effect Mr. Coolidge has refused to pardon Mr. Craig; he has merely remitted grudgingly the sentence imposed on Mr. Craig by Judge Mayer for alleged contempt of Judge Mayer's court; and the only official explanation offered is a singularly ill-mannered and demagogic diatribe against Mr. Craig from the pen of Attorney-General Daugherty, in which, after devoting several thousand words towards demonstrating that Mr. Craig was justly sentenced, Mr. Daugherty recommends that he be set free! The Attorney-General based his recommendation for the remission of the sentence, not on the ground that the ends of justice would be served thereby, or that Mr. Craig's incarceration would hinder the administrative business of New York City, but on his own extraordinary contention that Mr. Craig wished to go to jail and be a martyr. While admitting that the higher courts had not passed on the merits of the case, Mr. Daugherty proceeded to attach all the merit to Judge Mayer; and a large part of his opinion was made up of a statement by the judge himself, setting forth his own side. Partisanship could scarcely go farther than this.

In the course of his exposition Mr. Daugherty made several statements which betray a mediæval fetishism in the presence of legal authority. "There can be no affairs of any municipality," he remarked, "in any way comparable to the importance of maintaining the dignity, honour and usefulness of a Federal court." As an example of sheer impudence it would be difficult to match this dictum, even in a country where officialdom arrogates to itself a virtual descent from divinity. At this late day of political disillusionments it is almost impossible to believe that even an Attorney-General would have the temerity to inform the six million inhabitants of a city that their domestic administrative affairs are subordinate to the "dignity and honour"—as conceived by himself—of

some citizen who happens to have been elevated to the Federal bench. The implication that human beings were created to serve and glorify public officials, whether executive, legislative or judicial, is so monstrously indecent that every American with a reasonable regard for the best traditions of his country must impatiently look forward to the day when Mr. Daugherty will no longer be permitted to come within a three-mile limit of public office.

WHEN the new Congress settled down to business the newspapers provided animated reports of the first day of battle, with the little band of Republican insurgents in the House blocking temporarily the plans of organization of the Old Guard. This was doubtless a picturesque affair, but it was scarcely the significant news of the occasion. The real matter of interest to the citizens and taxpayers on this first full day of Congressional effort seems to us to have been somewhat shabbily treated in the dispatches. It relates to the number and quality of the measures which the newly inducted Congressmen flung into the hopper. This output of a single day totalled no less than 2750 bills, and of this number 2475, or ninety per cent, involved the spending of public money or the giving away of public property for the benefit of individuals, groups or localities in which, almost invariably, constituents of the respective Congressmen had a direct interest. It would require considerable research to compute the hundreds of millions of dollars of the taxpayers' money hazarded in this effort of one day by the forehanded brethren who are styled Representatives. Suffice it to say that the amount would be such as to make our present load of taxes seem trivial by comparison.

SOME 1925 of the measures were what are called "private" bills. These are bills providing for public largess in one form or another for favoured individuals or for favoured localities. Congressman Raker of California seems to have been the star performer on the list. He introduced twenty-six bills providing for individual pensions, six for the erection of public buildings in towns in his district, and thirty-three for the bestowal of captured German cannon upon towns in his district for ornamental purposes. In addition Mr. Raker introduced fifty-eight other bills of a general nature, most of which involved the expenditure of Federal funds for the benefit of localities or groups within his bailiwick. In the matter of "private" bills Mr. Fitzgerald of Ohio was second with fifty-two for pensions and the like; Mr. Tincher of Kansas third, with forty for German cannon and ten for individual allowances; and these were followed by Congressmen Fredericks with forty-six, Purnell of Indiana with forty-six, Mapes of Michigan with thirty-five, Vaile of Colorado with thirty-two, and Kearns of Ohio with thirty. Ohio, mother of presidents and patronage, seems to have carried off the honours in this effort at filching from the public till.

Of the 825 bills of a general nature, 550 would make inroads on the public purse to the advantage of favoured private interests or localities. These included 322 bills for the erection of public bridges or buildings at points

within the districts represented by the Congressmen introducing the measures; twenty bills for various outlays on harbours, including some harbours of doubtful utility; thirty bills to enlarge our already luxurious pension-scheme, ranging from measures to create new pension-classifications for relatives of veterans of the War of 1812 and of other conflicts now in our ancient history, to measures placing on the pension-roster the vast army of veterans of the recent European war; and, finally, 177 bills proposing the most various and handsome methods of scooping money out of the treasury for Tom, Dick and Harry, including a hoary old measure concocted by Congressman Dallinger of Massachusetts, described as "a bill for the allowance of certain claims for spoliation by the French, prior to 31 July, 1801." Truly the political mind has an appallingly long memory in these matters!

OF the remaining 275 bills of a general character, doubtless many that look innocent enough in the brief description furnished by the *Congressional Record* would prove on close examination to be merely further attacks on the general purse in the interests of privilege. In all the long roster, the measures which were clearly inspired by a sincere and intelligent regard for the general welfare are few and far between. Eleven measures aim at further restrictions of immigration, or seek so to curtail the liberties of aliens that only the most servile or stupid foreigners would care to venture among us. One measure provides for bestowing Congressional medals of honour on soldiers who took part in Mr. Wilson's remarkable invasion of Russia. Another measure is designed to protect American-bred canary birds against the competition of the pauper canaries of Europe! Such trivialities are not exceptional among the matters that engage our lawmakers. A respectable number of the proposals are designed merely to revive in effect the war-time espionage law and increase the police power of the Federal Government; and one measure, introduced by Mr. Blanton of Texas, is of such a nature that almost any judge would be likely to interpret it to exclude from the mails periodicals that criticize politicians while in office. We do not wish to be unduly pessimistic; and probably the majority of these tawdry, ignorant or indecent proposals, made in the enthusiasm of the Congressmen's first actual view of the Federal strong-box, will eventually fall by the wayside. None the less the intention remains. One can get some grim laughter out of the Congressional comedy, but we frankly prefer a less expensive form of amusement.

DR. WILHELM MARX, the latest German Chancellor, has got his military dictatorship by a free vote of the Reichstag in which the Socialist members joined with servile unanimity. Had the Reichstag refused to grant him the extraordinary powers he asked, he was authorized by President Ebert to dissolve it and to exercise the powers anyway. Dissolution would automatically have brought to an end the honorariums and prerogatives enjoyed by the legislators, and this consideration seems to have exercised a decisive influence upon those inveterate office-holders, the Socialist leaders. It was thoroughly in character for them to cling to the free-lunch wagon, even when it was rolling over their own principles.

OUR interest in the British election was largely negative. We had no desire to see our cousins let themselves in for the system of licensed thievery known as a protective tariff, and in common decency we hoped that they would not yield to the hypocritical pretences of the three reunited musketeers of the old hokum, Messrs. Lloyd George, Asquith and Grey. On the other hand the Labour party

under its present leadership has roused us to only the mildest enthusiasm. Many of its most conspicuous leaders devote so much energy to reassuring the timid electorate that the party is only Liberalism in a new coat, that they have more than half convinced us; and we have a feeling that the British people would do themselves no good turn to make a blanket investment in the sort of thing that sowed the dragon's teeth of the recent war. Probably a good part of the political intelligence of the country has gravitated to the Labour party, but it has also attracted some conspicuous political liabilities. In a practical sense the election was inconclusive, and it seems to us that the voters had no clear choice.

THERE has been a great to-do over the rebuke administered to Mr. Baldwin by the electorate, but some neglect of the emphatic repudiation of Mr. Lloyd George. This tireless demagogue leaped into the fray from the deck of the steamship on which he returned from his circuit-tour in America, and as actual captain of the reunited Liberal forces he waged his campaign with unusual vigour and unscrupulousness, even for him. As a result the Liberal gains fell far short of the opportunity, and half a dozen of Mr. Lloyd George's personal lieutenants were buried by the electors. It is encouraging to note that the British people seem to have immunized themselves from this sort of political infection. For the present the country seems to be in for a period of political irresolution. There is in sight no great leader of the intellectual stature, let us say, of M. Poincaré; but perhaps this is not an unmitigated misfortune, either for England or for the world. As far as the common man is concerned, a weak Government has its advantages.

THE celebration in this country of the centenary of the Monroe Doctrine coincides very nicely with the announcement that the dictators and the decorative sovereigns of Spain and Italy, in conference at Rome, have agreed to co-operate in the promotion of Latin economic and cultural influences in Hispanic America. Pan-Latinism, as an alternative to Pan-Americanism, has already gained many supporters in the countries to the south of us, and the missionaries of Mussolini and de Rivera are therefore assured of a warm welcome. The United States had its chance in Latin America, at a time when the Latins were afraid, above all things, of intervention from Europe. The Monroe Doctrine was welcomed, in the beginning, as the basis of a genuine friendship; but the process of disillusionment began with the Mexican War, and in our own time a great many of our neighbours are turning back to Europe for a new doctrine that will protect them against the "Yankee Juggernaut." If the Mussolinis of Europe come to figure in the South American mind as champions of liberty, it is because the Roosevelts of our own country are already established there in a very different character.

RECENT court proceedings in the two British colonies of Rhodesia and Kenya have afforded further evidence of the methods of the Nordic masters in spreading Christian civilization among backward peoples. In each case a native had been flogged to death by his white employer. In Rhodesia the British court decided that the victim eventually died from "fear" rather than from his injuries, and the two white men under indictment were released with trivial fines. In the Kenya case the employer administered the beating because the native had ridden a mare in foal, although there was no contention that the mare had been injured. The white defendant admitted that he flogged the native boy until he himself was exhausted, and then called successively upon three of his employees to continue the treatment; and after ten hours

the boy died. For this peculiarly brutal murder the employer was convicted of "grievous hurt," and sentenced to a short imprisonment. His defence was that the native was so undernourished that he died prematurely, and that because he begged after a time for a knife to end his torture, he had "the will to die."

DURING the past few years the news of several other beatings of this character, of which one at least resulted fatally, has trickled out of Kenya, but in no case has the sentence imposed been more than negligible. Probably conditions in that colony are no more inhumane than in other remote places where civilization is being bayoneted or bombed into the native populations in the interests of the distant imperialist investor. The immediate methods of coercion may vary in different places and under different flags, but the general technique remains the same. As long as imperialist conquest endures to promote fat profits for absentee-owners, the lash and revolver will be used in the backward regions to stimulate production and reduce the barbaric serfs to a properly docile frame of mind. Unfortunately this unnatural relationship between the native wards and the profit-seeking white masters is a double abomination. It not only serves to rob the native of his birthright, but it perverts the white overlords and lowers the dignity of labour in their home country. A terrible nemesis attaches to imperialism in that the more successfully it is conducted, the more thoroughly it degrades the quality of life at its source.

MR. OGDEN L. MILLS, who represents one of the New York City districts in the House of Representatives, told some members of the National Woman's party the other day that he was unwilling to support the proposed equal-rights amendment of the Federal Constitution which the party is championing, because he thought that "this Federal amendment business has gone far enough." "Some people," he added, "would like to make a crazy-quilt of the United States Constitution." This comes fairly near to hitting the nail on the head, not in regard to the value of the equal-rights proposal, which is doubtless quite good enough in its way, but in regard to the habit of tacking another notice on the Constitutional billboard every time somebody wants something that the out-of-date Constitution does not contemplate. Mr. Coolidge, we notice, proposed an amendment or two in his message to Congress, and the stream of similar proposals has already begun to flow strongly in both the Senate and the House. What the country needs is a new Constitution, not a further array of patches put on to cover holes and threadbare spots.

THE perennial talk of new subways for New York City is upon us again, this time with a proposal for a burrow that will introduce Heaven knows what new complications into a system already sufficiently confused. By all accounts, it is just such things as subways that we do best in this country, and yet the French could certainly teach us a thing or two, if we would give them a chance. The perfect simplicity of the Parisian system is a revelation to anyone who has been brought up in the granny-knotted confusion of lower Manhattan; and incidentally, the directing signs in the Parisian stations are perfectly uniform and explicit. The contrast emphasizes the fact that the French have produced something besides good pictures and bad politicians; they might even be persuaded to lend us an engineer.

THE annual report of the Attorney-General records the fact that his office is chiefly occupied with activities connected with the prohibition law. Last year Mr. Daugherty's men succeeded in crowding the courts with nearly 50,000

prohibition-cases, an increase of nearly 16,000 over the previous year. It would be highly interesting to discover the total cost to taxpayers and citizens of this voluptuous docket, including the salaries and expense-accounts of the army of special agents, snoopers, searchers and prosecutors, the extra judges and their retinues, the array of experts and advisers and ornamental hangers-on necessary for such performances. At the present rate of growth the expenses involved in looking after this one impossible law promise to absorb before long a considerable proportion of the cost of government, and the taxpayers may presently reach the point where they will be forced to give up an appreciable percentage of their incomes to prevent themselves from indulging in an occasional drink of hard liquor.

THE difficulties which attend the effort to amend an ancient form of words in order to introduce even a minimum of modern substance, is illustrated by the controversy which has lately flared out again in England over the proposed revision of the Prayer Book. According to the London *Sunday Times*, the proposal to sanction an alternative form of communion-service, which has been strongly favoured by the national assembly of the Church of England, has been met by the objection that the imposition of a canon in such a matter, with a considerable minority dissenting, would be disastrous. The House of Clergy, which in this matter appears to be more zealous than the House of Laymen, has accordingly voted to submit two revised forms instead of one; in other words, to offer to the communicant three forms of service instead of the one which he now has. "No doubt it may be argued," observes the *Times*, "that such a measure of latitude is only another exemplification of the English genius for compromise; but if so, it will probably strike many as a compromise with few or no parallels in any mundane matter of corresponding gravity."

WE can not help wondering why some of the clergy and laity who are being denounced by the "fundamentalists" should appear so anxious to parry the accusation of heresy which their opponents urge against them. Heretics they certainly are, whether the standard of judgment be a formal creed to which they have subscribed, or the time-honoured views of Christian faith and practice with which they are assumed, quite justly, to be in agreement. Whatever else Christianity may or may not be, it is surely not a scheme of salvation by indirection and avoidance; why, then, try to dodge the issue? Men do not, apparently, very much hesitate to call themselves heretics in politics or education or literature or conventional morals; and a goodly number may be found who have broken openly with their old associations, and as openly gone about forming new ones; why not welcome the charge of heresy in religion, and bear it as a mark of spiritual and intellectual courage, as it once was borne? There might be some martyrs, and martyrdom, we dare say, is disagreeable; but even that fate would be more honourable than the attempt to argue the words out of an instrument, or the seal off a bond.

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TOPICS OF THE TIME.

ON THE STATE OF THE UNION.

BACK in the grand old days of McKinley, Mr. Dooley, the shrewd political prophet of Archey Road, observed that a Presidential address to Congress was less significant of national policy than the specific arrangements made in the quiet of the Executive study in regard to the appointments of third- and fourth-class post-masters. We suspect it is easily possible to attach too much importance to the words of Mr. Coolidge, and too little to the silent but practical activity of that ardent political broker, Secretary C. Bascom Slemp. However, Mr. Coolidge's first message to Congress is before us, and whether Mr. Dooley was right or wrong, it presents matter suitable for analysis.

Because of his recent accession, and his previous disinclination to reveal his mind on matters of public policy, President Coolidge's formal utterance has attracted unusual attention. His message has had a good press, and it has evoked considerable commendation from politicians and publicists on both sides of the political fence; but most of this praise seems inspired by a sense of relief that no ideas of any reformist or unorthodox tinge appear to disturb the business-like calm of Mr. Coolidge's mind, no wistful idealism broods behind his terse phrases, no philosophical predilections cast their shadows across the plain structure of his speech. These considerations are explicable enough, for Heaven knows Americans must be weary enough of sentimental futility and moral bombast. Yet Mr. Coolidge's programme must be judged primarily by its relation to the practical needs of the American people, and by nothing else.

The entire population of this country suffers under a number of disabilities which the Government is in a position to alleviate or remove. The people are bled severely by the tax-collector. They are mulcted by various privileged groups which, under such devices as the tariff law and other more direct charters of monopoly, maintain prices for goods and services at artificial levels. In the case of some of these groups, such as the transportation-lines, the Government goes so far as to back the inflated prices with its own sanction and authority. As a result of this grotesque system, at one end of the scale we have production handicapped by a lack of inspiration among the workers, so that in some instances they have to be actually coerced to carry on, and at the other end of the scale we find a considerable proportion of those engaged in our largest and most fundamental industry—that of agriculture—unable to make both ends meet. It is by its relevance to such urgent realities as these that a Presidential message must be weighed.

Mr. Coolidge is for a substantial reduction of taxes, along the lines suggested by Secretary Mellon; and he devotes some emphatic words to the necessity for governmental economy. He would not compromise on these things even to the extent of endorsing the scheme to pay a bonus to veterans of the late war, and we are glad to note that he fails to recommend a bonus for the heroic shipowners whose appetite for largess was so whetted by war-time profits. On the other hand, Mr. Coolidge intimates that, despite our unclouded horizon, it is desirable to increase the appropriations for the army and navy, on which the taxpayers are already laying out the sum of \$650 million a year. He proposes to inaugurate an elaborate tsaristic espionage-bureau for the registration and supervision of aliens; and in support of this strangely un-American idea he attempts to make the point that

the scheme will serve to eliminate "those who do not wish to be partakers in the American spirit." Finally, in the interest of the Volstead law, he urges the acquisition of a new navy to patrol our coasts for "enforcement"—a plan that would quadruple the present outlay for "enforcement" of ten millions a year. To those who have read in the *Manchester Guardian* the stories of British rum-runners being escorted up New York harbour to their unloading points by revenue-boats, this recommendation will seem an odd sort of frugality. It is difficult to understand how an Executive with any real passion for economy could avoid urging that the provisions of the prohibition act be brought within the bounds of decency and order.

Each year the budget gives to the underlying population in definite figures the distressing details of the cost of government. The far greater totals of the exactions of privilege under the tariff-schedules and the various other charters of monopoly, remain indeterminate. If Mr. Coolidge offers any relief from these exactions, it is of the vaguest character. A cardinal point in his party's creed is a tariff which in effect transfers the taxing-power to favoured private interests. For Mr. Coolidge the tariff is a cornerstone that can not be changed. Obviously no relief may be expected from him. Two decades ago the Government was assuring us that the exactions of privilege would be allayed if large industrial groups were split up. Mr. Coolidge hints that in some mysterious manner relief will come if industries combine in larger units. He is willing, in the interest of lower rates, to go so far as to compel the railways to coalesce. He urges "greater unity of ownership" in the coal-fields. Twenty years ago the Government emphatically insisted that only Federal regulation could check the rising tide of charges in transportation. Mr. Coolidge would seem to be reaching the point of abandoning this policy. "Unless the Government adheres to the rule of making a rate that will yield a fair return, it must abandon rate-making altogether," he declares. A fair return on what? one wonders. Mr. Coolidge speaks with great anxiety of the necessity of avoiding "confiscatory rates," but he does not seem to realize that a rate may be confiscatory for the shipper and the public, as well as for the railway, and hence his solicitude seems somewhat one-sided.

This one-sidedness is illustrated also when one comes upon his passage dealing with the troubles of the farmer. The farmer is a factor fully as important in our national economy as the railway-investor, and much more considerable in numbers. Mr. Coolidge, however, is not at all sympathetic with the idea that the Government should step in and fix prices on his product that will "yield a fair return" for him. Not at all. "Simple and direct methods put into operation by the farmer himself," he says, "are the only real sources for restoration." To this he adds a pious hope for cheaper transportation-rates—not, we trust, "confiscatory"—and lower-priced fertilizer; and better facilities for the farmer to borrow money. As Senator Magnus Johnson recently remarked, the farmers of his State are not interested in the opportunity to borrow more money, but in the opportunity to make a little; and it is clear that Mr. Coolidge's economic philosophy does not embrace the modification of the system of privilege necessary to open to the farmer this opportunity.

On foreign affairs Mr. Coolidge is quite reticent. The League, as far as this country is concerned, is a dead issue. The scheme of the World Court, which he inherited from Mr. Harding, he commends to the Senate, but leaves an opening as wide as a church

door for the amendments of the irreconcilables. In recent messages of our Presidents, Russia customarily affords an opportunity for comic relief, and in this Mr. Coolidge is true to form. In regard to recognition he is as highly moral as Mr. Hughes or Mr. Pecksniff. "I do not propose," he loftily declares, "to barter away for the privilege of trade any of the cherished rights of humanity." Yet Mr. Coolidge from some mysterious source has received evidence that Russia is returning to "the ancient ways of society." We gather that the reports under this head of Mr. Hughes's "observers" in Russia would make unusually entertaining reading. By the cherished rights of humanity Mr. Coolidge clearly means the payment of foreign bondholders; and here he makes the point, which will surely stagger the French brethren, that the American Government does not insist on the recognition of the Tsarist debt, but only the debt contracted by "the newly-formed Republic of Russia." Inasmuch as the only money loaned to Russia by America since the fall of the Tsar was the \$200 million which M. Bakhmetiev expended so generously for invasions of Russia directed against the present Government, one would think that Mr. Coolidge should use a little more discretion in referring to this sum. Finally, since a dozen other European Governments owe us billions of dollars on which they show not the slightest intention of making good, it seems odd to pick on Russia for this relatively trivial sum, loaned under the most doubtful circumstances.

Yet if the matter of Mr. Coolidge's exposition is somewhat superficial and uninspiring, and in places grotesque, his manner is heartily to be commended. Time was when he interlarded his public addresses with painful banalities. Recently one of his sentimental admirers in Washington gathered sixty-four choice specimens of these and sent them broadcast to editors; and we have before us this awful collection, including such gems as "the classic of all classics is the Bible," "all men are peers, the humblest with the most exalted," "there can be no proper observance of a birthday which forgets the mother." We gladly note that Mr. Coolidge has apparently put such indiscretions behind him. His sentences are clear and short, almost to the point of curtness. He indulges in no tearful sentimentalities and no invocations of "the heart of the world." Instead of arrogating to his Government the moral leadership of the nations, he modestly states that in so far as America seeks justice she should command a moral influence. In other words he has avoided the customary literary vulgarities of his office. For this relief, at least, let us be truly thankful.

DOES EXPERIENCE TEACH?

To our way of thinking, there is great significance attaching to an interview given out by Senator Norris of Nebraska for publication in the *New York World* of 9 December. Mr. Norris has been in the national legislature for twenty years, and intends to retire at the end of his present term, a self-confessed failure. "Under the present conditions in Washington," he says, "and conditions which have existed ever since I came to Congress, it is almost impossible to obtain effective legislation in the interest of the plain people. I have been bucking this game for twenty years, and there is no way of beating it."

Here, we say again, is a most remarkable statement. We commend it to those who still believe that the State is a social rather than an anti-social institution, and that "the interest of the plain people" can be pro-

moted by the methods of organized political government. As far as we know, there is not a flaw in Senator Norris's record. He seems to have kept a steadfast eye on the public welfare throughout his career. Now, at the end, he frankly acknowledges that the thing can not be done, and he gives good, if superficial, reasons why it can not be done. These reasons are well known to every one. Senator Norris has told us nothing new. Through the power of patronage, he says, the Executive "has become more powerful than all the rest of the Government combined . . . the people have become powerless to punish their own servants"; and he cites the "lame duck" appointment of Mr. New, Mr. Poindexter, Mr. Mondell, Mr. Kellogg and Mr. Taft, all of whom were roundly repudiated by the people, to better jobs than those which the people took away from them. Mr. Norris speaks also of the punishments which the Executive puts upon legislators who will not take orders from the White House, and he calls attention to the enormous army of Federal appointees and agents who form in every State a powerful political machine under direct control of the Executive. All these, however, as we said, are already matters of open and notorious knowledge. They can not, no doubt, be too often pointed out, especially by persons like Senator Norris who have had long and conspicuous experience with them; yet we can not help thinking that Mr. Norris would have done better if he had gone below these superficial matters and exposed the fundamental reality that underlies them.

Mr. Norris appears still to think that political government was instituted for social purposes, and that it has somehow become perverted and may be restored. The remedies that he proposes indicate that this is still the course of his thought. We earnestly ask him to devote some of his forthcoming leisure to considering an alternative proposition, namely: that political government, whether autocratic, constitutional or republican, is an anti-social institution created primarily to perpetuate and promote the economic exploitation of one class in our society by another, and for no other purpose whatever. If Mr. Norris will view this proposition in the perspective of his own experience, and in the longer perspective of the history of political government from its beginnings, we are confident that he will find that it fits the facts much better than his own thesis. We have great respect for Mr. Norris and would not willingly appear to lecture him; the limitations of an editorial do not permit the amenities to be made as clear as we wish they were. Mr. Norris's chief interest, "the interest of the plain people," is also ours, and this must serve as our excuse for addressing him as directly as we do.

Mr. Norris, in short, like Mr. La Follette, Mr. Borah and our liberal friends generally, impresses us somewhat as a man would who had taken for granted that a reaper is made to ride on, spent twenty years in trying to tinker a reaper into some sort of serviceability for that purpose, and finally quit the job as hopeless, but without ever once going back to question the truth of his original assumption. If he had ever questioned this assumption, or would question it now, he would discover that the reason why a reaper does not work well as a vehicle is that it was never meant to be used as a vehicle, but for another purpose entirely; and that when used for that purpose it works very well indeed. Similarly we think that Mr. Norris might see that the phenomena which he complains of and which impress him so unfavourably, are wholly natural and to be expected. If government exists, as Voltaire says, solely for the pur-

pose of taking money out of one person's pocket and putting it into another's—and we firmly believe that upon investigation Mr. Norris will discover this to be its only primary function—then it is surely a little fanciful and illusory to expect it to work well for a directly opposite purpose; and perhaps also Senator Norris will permit us to say that the effort spent on trying to make it work well for an opposite purpose is rather worse than wasted.

In our view such efforts are futile, undesirable and misleading. It seems a pity that at the end of Mr. Norris's long experience, he should still have nothing better by way of remedy to offer than the suggestion so often made and so often acted on, of "putting good men in office." As for his other suggestion of abolishing the Electoral College, let him look at England, where, from the point of view of democracy, political institutions are so far superior to our own, and see how they work there. Better in many respects, no doubt, than they do here; but do they work enough better to justify Mr. Norris in believing that his proposed reform would really accomplish anything? No; at a time like this, when all political institutions are under profound and general suspicion, it is idle to recommend a mere pottering with the externals of a system. The thing is to show clearly and distinctly the nature and purpose of the system itself. The thing is to show that in its primary essential purposes, political government itself is anti-social and evil, and continually to marshal before the public the proofs of this which lie about on every hand. If Mr. Norris will devote himself henceforth to disseminating this information and exhibiting these proofs, he will find the next twenty years rich in the satisfactions that the last twenty years have denied him. He need not trouble about the constructive side of the question; that will come later. When the people really become aware that political government in any form is their greatest social enemy, they will find their own constructive methods of dealing with it. First things first; and the first thing is to touch and arouse an intelligent apprehension of the State as an engine of economic exploitation, an instrument for enabling one class in our society to appropriate without compensation the labour and the labour-products of another class; and this is work for one man's lifetime, and more.

PROSPEROUS EUROPE.

FOR the good libertarian who persists in the ancient and honourable tradition of Godwin, Proudhon and Kropotkin, the current history of Europe is not compounded wholly of disasters. It is true that in the field of economics and of politics, the practices and the theories hitherto most commonly accepted are cracking under an exceptional strain; but on the other hand, it is also true that in this same testing-time, when institutions maintained by force and compulsion are unable to hold their own, other institutions based upon the principle of voluntary association are flourishing as they never did before. It may seem an impish mockery to speak of prosperity in Europe to-day; and yet, on the basis of information published by the Co-operative League in this country, and by similar organizations abroad, we are disposed to say that the co-operative movement in Europe is really prospering.

In Germany, where economic and political conditions are in general so desperate, the membership of the societies associated with the Central Union of German Consumers' Societies has increased from 1,718,000 in 1914 to 2,308,000 in 1919, and 3,600,000 in 1923. In pre-war days, the annual sales amounted to about 350

gold marks per member; to-day they average only about 150 gold marks, but the extraordinary increase in numerical strength, in the face of the losses in territory and population resulting from the war, has approximately made good the decline in the purchasing-power of the individual members. Taking for granted a general decline in non-co-operative business, it may be assumed that the co-operative societies now bulk much larger in the economic life of the country than they did before the war.

In Austria, the old economic and political institutions have suffered much more seriously than in Germany; but in spite of this fact, the Union of Consumers' Societies was able to report in 1921 an increase of 295 per cent over its membership in 1914 within the present area of the Austrian Republic, and to-day the society in Vienna is perhaps the largest co-operative organization in Europe. In the presence of a very serious decline in the purchasing-power of the population, the total amount of business done by the Austrian societies has fallen off considerably; but these societies have been saved, by their increase in membership, from a full participation in the general calamity.

In Hungary, the strength of the societies affiliated with the Co-operative Wholesale increased from 191,000 in 1914 to 900,000 in 1921, and this in spite of losses of territory. In Czecho-Slovakia, the Czech union had 71,000 members in 1914, 300,000 in 1919, and 824,000 in 1921. The Czechs were carried along, perhaps, by a new nationalist enthusiasm, but at the same time the Germans in the new Czecho-Slovak State were setting an example to "oppressed minorities" everywhere, in the matter of looking after their own interests; for the membership of the societies affiliated with the German union expanded from 182,000 in 1919 to 303,000 in 1921. In Poland, the societies of the national union numbered 181,000 members in 1919, and 349,000 in 1921.

Farther east, the All-Russian Central Union of Consumers' Societies, the famous "Centrosyus," has just celebrated its twenty-fifth anniversary. In the period 1914-17 the membership of the consumers' co-operatives in Russia increased from 1,650,000 to 11,550,000, and the sales from 290 million to 1,244 million gold roubles. According to estimates published by the "Centrosyus," the total value of Russia's internal trade in articles of primary necessity was decreasing steadily during this period, and amounted in 1917 to 2,764 million gold roubles; in other words, co-operative business developed as other business declined, and at the end of the pre-revolutionary period the consumers' co-operatives were handling considerably more than a third of the country's trade in necessities. The development of co-operation on the basis of a common interest in production rather than in consumption was less rapid, but in 1917 the industrial societies already numbered 4,000, and the agricultural societies 6,000.

After a period of nationalization, the co-operative societies of Russia began in 1921 to resume their original status as voluntary associations. In 1922, in the reduced territory of Russia, there were approximately two-thirds as many consumers' societies as in 1917, with sales amounting, in terms of gold roubles, to something more than one-third of the total for the latter year. In contrast with the consumers' groups, those organized from the producers' end showed an extraordinary development; by the beginning of 1923, the number of the industrial societies had been multiplied four and one-half times, and that of the agricultural societies more than six times. These figures would seem to indicate a tendency toward the spon-

taneous and rapid development of co-operative production, once the monopoly-control of natural resources is broken; but in view of the fact that the Soviet Government has played a large, though recently a diminishing, part in the economic life of the country, all these post-revolutionary changes in Russia must have for the present a somewhat uncertain status in the history of voluntary association.

In France the National Federation of Consumers' Societies, embracing about half the distributive organizations of the country, has grown very rapidly in membership, from 254,000 in 1913 to 1,361,000 in 1920. In terms of the depreciating franc, the amount of the sales reported for 1920 was two and one-half times that for the preceding year. In England and Scotland, where the bottom has not altogether dropped out of business-as-usual, the co-operatives do not show any such remarkable increase in membership as has been recorded in the countries more disastrously affected by the war; and yet the total strength of the societies reporting to the Co-operative Union grew from 3,011,000 in 1913 to nearly 4,600,000 in 1921. The sales of these societies increased during the same period from £130,036,000 to £334,383,000.

With all this to fall back on in the way of experience, the man who believes in the great possibilities of voluntary association is no longer at a disadvantage when the argument turns from theory to practice. To the question, "Will it work?" he can reply simply that it *has* worked; for the principle has been put to the test under conditions that have shattered several Governments and destroyed any number of economic enterprises; and now, after years of trial by millions of people, the co-operatives seem to be quite generally "making good."

A NOTE ON THE ELECTIVE SYSTEM.

TAKING the path that the youthful collegian must follow at the beginning of each academic year, we have just made our way through a college catalogue; and now, as a result of this exercise, we are more than ever convinced that the only man who can safely be turned loose to educate himself in this wilderness of special courses, is the man who is already educated; and we mean this to apply not only to the formative side of education, but to the informative as well. In fact it seems to us that the great variety of special offerings, in combination with the elective system of selection among these offerings, has produced results which are particularly disastrous on the side of information.

When we speak here of informative education, we are not thinking of that special training which fits the student for some particular job; rather, we are assuming that the educated man should possess, over and above the lore of his calling, a general acquaintance with the history of mankind, with the scientific view of the universe, with the best in world-literature and the other arts, and with the major concepts of philosophy; and we submit that no youth left free to wander through the college catalogue is likely to compass the fundamentals in this broad field of knowledge. Indeed, it may as well be said that the thing can not be done; for what results can we expect from a system of special courses and free election which abandons to immature and undisciplined minds a labour that is almost beyond the strength of the strongest men of our time—the labour of selection and synthesis?

The problem of the wandering student is a perfectly specific one, and there is every reason why we should deal with it in the most specific terms. At the out-

set, then, of his academic career, the student is ordinarily required to select some major subject of study. If he feels (or assumes for the occasion) an interest, say, in history, he will be expected to divide his time between required work in history and in certain other subjects, and elective courses which he may choose at random. There is some promise of guidance in the requirements of the student's major department, but let us see what this guidance amounts to. The student is directed, perhaps, to take one course in science; he turns the pages of his announcement until he comes upon a bewildering display of special courses in the several sciences, and for one of these he registers. Again, he may be obligated to take one or two courses in "literature," but here the situation is the same. Indeed, the requirements of his department are likely to be so loose, and the courses so highly specialized, that he will come out with no general knowledge of any field, even that of his major subject. With the most mature judgment and the best will in the world, the student could not piece out from the catalogue a combination of odds and ends, required or elective, which would provide him with the fundamentals of an informative education.

If it be both possible and desirable, as we assume it to be, that every collegian should be instructed in the essentials of history, science, art and philosophy, then there must be a deliberate stiffening of requirements, and at least an attempt at a selection and synthesis which will condense within the scope of these requirements a survey of the field of knowledge. The student who had accomplished such a survey would no longer be a stranger in great regions of the world of matter and spirit, as so many half-educated people are to-day; nor would he necessarily have missed the formative influence of the elective system and of intensive study in some special field. It is said that requirements kill initiative—that the survey-method encourages superficiality; but we should favour the retention of the elective system in the domain of specialized studies, and the development of an even more intensive specialization of work is frankly special. The thing that we are quarrelling with is the regime of compromise which throws so much of the student's time into the region of half-specialization that he is left in the end uninformed and undisciplined as well.

MISCELLANY.

WHAT a wonderful thing it is to see how persistently the things of the spirit keep their hold upon the German people! By the courtesy of Mr. Scheffauer I have lately come into some statistics of book-production that are very striking. In the year 1912, German publishers produced 34,800 books as against 12,100 in England and 9600 in France. In 1922, after all the havoc wrought by the war, and the far greater havoc wrought by the peace, Germany still somehow managed to put out nearly 32,000 books. Before the war, too, a publisher could cover the expense of the average book by a sale of 1900 copies, and in 1922 he had to sell 2470 copies in order to make ends meet.

THESE facts shine out of Germany's horrible plight with an extraordinary significance. They mark a great people and a highly civilized people; and the longer time I have in which to compare the Germans with their conquerors since the war, the greater shame and uneasiness I feel at my own country's share in "consenting unto their death," like Saul of Tarsus at the stoning of Stephen—and Saul's position I always thought about as low and unmanly as that of any Scriptural worthy. Apparently, whatever else the Germans must go without, they can not go without

books and music. I often wonder how well by comparison the actual civilization of the United States would hold up if it had been put to anything like the strain to which Germany's has been put.

I WOULD not, of course, measure the civilization of a country mechanically by its production of books and music, any more than I would measure it mechanically by the production of newspapers, banks, motor-cars and railway-mileage. Everything depends upon what the books and music are like. According to all available information, however, such as is furnished by publishers' lists and by advertisements, most of the current German production in both books and music seems to be of a very high order. One can not tell to a certainty what the books are like, I admit, until one has seen them, and I have seen but few. These were extremely good; and such announcements as I have perused seemed to show a large proportion of good and serious work.

WITH regard to music, one may speak with more assurance. I have before me the programmes of all the concerts given in Munich for a single month. The average runs to nearly three for every night in the month, including Sundays; and this, with a nightly opera, gives a fair allowance of music for a small city. If New York gave half as much in proportion to its population, there would not be nearly enough concert-halls to go round; and New York gives a great deal, and what it gives is usually very good. The next thing that strikes one in these Munich programmes is the enormous, almost exclusive, predominance of classical music. The fever of interest in musical modernism seems quite to have run out. Hindemith's name is on one programme, sandwiched between Beethoven and Mozart! I see the names of Mahler, Strauss and Reger, but only once or twice. The names that appear oftenest are the great names of old; and I observe that the enterprising programme-makers of Munich have been digging around among what one may perhaps without disrespect call the second-raters of the classical periods—excellent musicians who happened to be thrown into the shade by the rising glory of greater names, but who have a great deal to say for themselves. This feature of Munich's musical enterprise can not be too much commended at this time. My friend Dr. Mason, who has always so admirably kept to the middle ground between too much stiffness in rejecting novelty and too much ease in admitting it, would be rejoiced by these programmes, as I was.

THOMAS HOBBS remarked very sensibly that "mere antiquity is in itself nothing respectable, and if it were, our own age is the oldest." When a new literary work is presented to us and praised as a classic (I speak of literature because I am perhaps not quite so helpless in it as in the other arts, but I think Dr. Mason might say that the same thing is true of music also), the critical temper desires neither to reject nor accept it, but to sift it, to see how much good it has in it, and according to its assay of good over bad, to give it its approximate place in the great general body of literature. The musical spirit of Munich, I should say, is turning to the classics, not because they are old but because they are good, because they are the best and most satisfying that can be found. It is an instinct, when one is profoundly distressed and depressed, to seek out and cleave to the best one knows—*mane nobiscum, Domine, nam advesperascit!* One may go through a period of recklessness, but the reaction from it is invariably towards the best that is in one's experience.

JOURNEYMAN.

AMERICAN ARCHITECTURE.

THE MEDIÆVAL TRADITION.

FOR a hundred years or so after its settlement, there lived and flourished in America a type of community which was rapidly disappearing in Europe. This community was embodied in villages and towns whose mummified remains even to-day have a rooted dignity that the most gigantic metropolises do not often possess. If we would understand the architecture of America in a period when good building was almost universal, we must understand something of the kind of life that this community fostered.

There are two or three things that stand in the way of our seeing the life of a New England village; and one of them is the myth of the pioneer, the conception of the first settlers as a free band of "Americans" throwing off the bedraggled garments of Europe and starting life afresh in the wilderness. So far from giving birth to a new life, the settlement of the northern American seaboard prolonged for a little while the social habits and economic institutions which were fast crumbling away in Europe, particularly in England: in the villages of the New World there flickered up the last dying embers of the mediæval order. Whereas in England the common lands were being confiscated for the benefit of an aristocracy, and the arable turned into sheep-runs for the profit of the great proprietors, in New England the common lands were re-established with the founding of a new settlement. In England the depauperate peasants and yeomen were driven into the towns to become casual workers, menials and soldiers; in New England, on the other hand, it was at first only with threats of punishment and conscription that the town workers were kept from going out into the country-side to seek a more independent living from the soil. Just as the archaic speech of the Elizabethans has lingered in the Kentucky mountains, so the Middle Ages at their best lingered in the Appalachian foreshore; and in the organization of our New England villages one sees a greater resemblance to the mediæval Utopia of Sir Thomas More than to the classic republic, in the style of Montesquieu, which was actually founded in the eighteenth century.

The colonists who sought to establish permanent communities—as distinct from those who erected only trading posts—were not a little like those whom the cities of Greece used to plant about the Mediterranean and Black Sea littoral. Like the founders of the "Ancient City," the Puritans first concerned themselves to erect an altar, or rather, to lay the foundation of an edifice which denied the religious value of altars. In the crudest of "smoaky wigwams," as an early observer notes, the Puritans remember to "sing psalms, pray, and praise their God"; and although we of to-day may regard their religion as harsh and nay-saying, we can not forget that it was a central point of their existence, and not an afterthought piled as it were on material prosperity for the sake of a good appearance.

As Weeden says in his excellent "Economic and Social History of New England," the settlers "laid out the village in the best order to attain two objects: first, the tillage and culture of the soil; second, the maintenance of a 'civil and religious society.'" Around the meeting-house the rest of the community crystallized in the most definite of patterns, tight and homogeneous.

The early provincial village bears another resemblance to the early Greek city: it does not continue to grow at such a pace that it either becomes overcrowded

within or spills beyond its limits into dejected suburbs; still less does it seek what we ironically call greatness by increasing the number of its inhabitants. When the corporation has a sufficient number of members, that is to say, when the land is fairly occupied, and when the addition of more land would unduly increase the hardship of working it from the town, or would spread out the farmers and make it difficult for them to attend to their religious and civil duties, the original settlement throws out a new shoot. So Charlestown threw off Woburn; so Dedham colonized Medfield; so Lynn founded Nahant.

The Puritans knew and applied a principle that Plato had long ago pointed out in the "Republic," namely: that an intelligent and socialized community will continue to grow only as long as it can remain a unit; and beyond that point growth must cease, or the community will disintegrate and cease to be an organic thing. Economically, this method of city development kept land-values at a properly low level, and prevented the engrossing of land for the sake of a speculative rise. The advantage of the Puritan method of settlement comes out plainly when one contrasts it with the trader's paradise of Manhattan; for by the middle of the seventeenth century all the land on Manhattan Island was privately owned, although only a small part of it was cultivated, and so eagerly had the teeth of monopoly bitten into this fine morsel that there was already a housing-shortage.

One more point of resemblance: all the inhabitants of an early New England village were co-partners in a corporation; they admitted into their community only as many members as they could assimilate. This co-partnership was based upon a common sense as to the purpose of the community, and upon a roughly equal division of the land into individual plots taken in freehold and a share of the common fields, of which there might be half a dozen or more.

There are various local differences in the apportionment of the land. In many cases the minister and deacons have a larger share than the rest of the community; but in Charlestown, for example, the poorest had six or seven acres of meadow and twenty-five or thereabouts of upland; and this would hold pretty well throughout the settlements. Not merely is membership in the community guarded: the right of occupying and transferring the land is also restricted, and again and again, in the face of the General Assembly, the little villages make provisions to keep the land from changing hands without the consent of the corporation; "it being our real intent," as the burghers of Watertown put it, "to sitt down there close together." These regulations have a positive side as well; for in some cases the towns helped the poorer members of the corporation to build houses, and as a new member was voted into the community, lots were assigned immediately, without further ado. A friend of mine has called this system "Yankee communism," and I cheerfully bring the institution to the attention of those who do not realize upon what subversive principles Americanism, historically, rests.

What is true of the seventeenth century in New England holds good for the eighteenth in the Moravian settlements of Pennsylvania; and it is doubtless true for many another obscure colony; for the same spirit lingered, with a parallel result in architecture and industry, in the Utopian communities of the early nineteenth century. It is pretty plain that this type of pioneering, this definite search for the good life, was conducted on an altogether different level from the ruthless exploitation of the individual muckers and scavengers who hit the trail west of the Alleghanies.

Such remains as the current Bach Festival at Bethlehem give us a notion of the cultural values which the mediæval community carried over from the Old World to the New. There is some of this spirit left even in the architecture of the Shaker community at Mount Lebanon, New York, which was built as late as the nineteenth century.

Accustomed as we are to look upon the village as a quaint relic of a bygone age, we do not readily see that its form was dictated by social and economic conditions. Where the village had to defend itself against the Indians, it was necessary to lay it out compactly, so that it might be surrounded by a stockade, and so that the meeting-house might be such a rallying-centre as the castle was in Europe, or as the high temple-site was in classic times; but in the eighteenth century the Indian figured less in the scheme of colonial life, and along the seacoast or the river—as at Wells Beach in Maine or Litchfield in Connecticut—the village became a long strip upon a single highroad, and the arable land stretched in narrow plots from the house to the water, so that the farmer might better protect his crops and his live stock from the fox, the wolf, the woodchuck, the hawk and the deer.

I emphasize these points of structure because of the silly notion superficial observers sometimes carry away from the villages of the Old World or of New England; namely, that their irregularity is capricious and uneconomical, associated only with the vagaries of the straying cow. It would be more correct to say that precisely the reverse was true. The inequality of size and shape of plots shows always that attention was paid to the function the land was to perform, rather than to the mere possession of property; thus, there was a difference in size between home-lots, which were always seated in the village, and purely agricultural tracts which were usually on the outskirts; and in Dedham, for example, married men had home-lots of twelve acres, while bachelors received only eight. Another reason for the compactness of the village was a decree of the General Court in Massachusetts, in 1635, that no dwelling should be placed more than half a mile from the meeting-house in any new plantation. Even irregularities in the layout and placement of houses, which can not be referred to such obvious points as these, very often derive from an attempt to break the path of the wind, to get a good exposure in summer, or to profit by a view.

We have learned in recent years to appreciate the felicities of eighteenth-century colonial architecture, and even the earlier mediæval tradition is now coming into its own; but we lose our perspective altogether if we think that the charm of an early New England house was a mere matter of overhanging second stories or of panelled walls. The just design, the careful execution, the fine style that brings the houses into harmony no matter how diverse the purposes they served—for the farmhouse shares its virtues with the mill, and the mill with the meeting-house—was the outcome of a common spirit, nourished by men who had divided the land fairly and who shared adversity and good fortune together. When the frame of the house is to be raised, a man's neighbours will lend him a hand; if the harvest is in danger, every man goes out into the fields, even if his own crop is not at stake; if a whale founders on the beach, even the smallest boy bears a hand and gets a share of the reward. Schooled in the practices of his guild, the mediæval carpenter pours his all into his work; and since sale does not enter into the bargain, it is both to his patron's advantage to give him the best materials, and

to his own advantage to make the most of them. While agriculture is the mainstay of life, and the mediæval tradition flourishes, the New England village reaches a pretty fair pitch of worldly perfection.

In the centre of the village is the common; a little to one side will be the meeting-house, and presently the school; and along the roads where the houses are set at regular intervals is a great columnar arcade of elm trees. All these elements are essential to our early provincial architecture, and without them it is a little bare and forbidding. The trees, above all, are an important part of New England architecture: in summer they absorb moisture and cool the air, besides giving shade; in the winter their huge boles serve as a partial windbreak; even the humus from their leaves keeps the soil of the lawns in better order. The apple trees that cling to the warmer side of the house are not less essential. Would it be an exaggeration to say that there has never been a more complete and intelligent partnership between the earth and man than existed, for a little while, in the old New England village? In what other part of the world has such an harmonious balance between the natural and the social environment been preserved?

Nowadays we have begun to talk about garden-cities, and we realize that the essential elements in a garden-city are the common holding of land by the community, and the co-operative ownership and direction of the community itself. We refer to all these things as if they represented a distinct achievement of modern thought; but the fact of the matter is that every New England village up to the middle of the eighteenth century was a garden-city in every sense that we now apply to that term, and happily its gardens and its harmonious framework have frequently lingered on, even though the economic foundations have long been overthrown. This is a mediæval tradition in American architecture which should be of some use to our architects and city-planners; for it is a much more substantial matter than the building of perpendicular churches or Tudor country-houses in painfully archæological adaptations. If we wish to tie up with our colonial tradition we must recover more than the architectural forms: we must recover the interests, the standards, the institutions that gave to the villages and buildings of early times their appropriate shapes. To do much less than this is merely to bring back a fad which might as well be Egyptian as "colonial" for all the sincerity that it exhibits.

LEWIS MUMFORD.

THE FUTURE OF SOVIET RUSSIA.

THE sixth anniversary of the Russian Bolshevik Revolution has just been observed in Moscow and Petrograd and the other Russian cities and towns, of course with the usual impressive fanfare of fiery speeches, military parades, and mass-processions of workers carrying red banners. It is natural that the Russian Communists should celebrate their revolutionary holiday with somewhat more heart-felt ardour than the most patriotic American is likely to bestow upon a Fourth-of-July demonstration. Each new year of undisturbed Soviet power means a lightening of the strain in Russia, an added chance that the desperate adventure undertaken in November, 1917, may be brought to a successful conclusion.

The anniversary of the great November upheaval is calculated to inspire thought for the future as well as for the past. The stability of the Soviet power is coming to be conceded, however grudgingly and reluctantly, even by those who would hail its downfall with

the utmost delight. Almost three years have passed since the Kronstadt revolt, the last serious outbreak against the Communist rule; and during this time economic conditions in Russia have slowly but steadily improved. One is now inclined to inquire what use the Communists will make of their power, what new type of State is gradually coming into existence in Russia.

The whole development of the Russian Revolution since the Bolshevik seizure of power has been dominated by the principle of dictatorship, by the concentration of all power in the hands of the small minority of the Russian people enrolled in the ranks of the Communist party. Whatever theoretical objections may be raised to the idea of minority-dictatorship, it is difficult to see how a revolutionary party in Russia could have secured and maintained power by any other means. The former Russian ruling classes, the landlords, the officers, the factory-owners, had not the slightest intention of surrendering their privileged economic and social position in response to adverse parliamentary votes. The Kornilov mutiny, an attempt which failed because of its inadequate preparation, was only one sign of the readiness of the old ruling classes to maintain their power by the use of extra-constitutional methods. The city factory-owners were also eager to use the weapon of the lock-out against the rebellious workers.

"The bony hand of hunger will clutch the workers by the throat and bring them back to their senses."

So said a well-known Moscow industrialist shortly before the November upheaval. Against enemies who did not hesitate to employ the most unparliamentary military and economic means in order to maintain their power, a revolutionary party that limited itself to Constitutional methods would have been condemned to defeat in advance. During the civil war, in which so many advantages, in the shape of superior military and administrative experience and extensive foreign help, were on the side of the reaction, the Revolutionary Government's only chance of success rested in the maintenance of iron discipline. To have abdicated after the civil war had been fought through to a successful conclusion would have been a psychological impossibility for a party of convinced and fanatical revolutionists.

So the Communist dictatorship still endures in Russia, and, so far as one can see, it is likely to go on indefinitely, although some of its applications may be gradually softened. Now any dictatorship, if it is not to degenerate into a corrupt bureaucracy, must have certain self-imposed restraints and standards of conduct. The group or class that holds power must be animated by some powerful ideal aside from that of self-advancement or self-enrichment. The old Russian governing clique had no such ideal, and its consequent inner rottenness was a powerful contributory cause in its downfall. The imperial bureaucracy which ruled Germany before the Revolution gave the country a conscientious and technically efficient administration because most of its members were sincerely permeated with a traditional sense of duty to the State.

Against the temptations of unrestrained power the Russian Communists have two psychological safeguards: their revolutionary idealism and their party-discipline. It is fortunate for the preservation of their morale that the party-organization has a sort of steel framework in the shape of a number of veteran revolutionists whose personal incorruptibility and selfless devotion to the cause are beyond question. It is these men whom one usually finds in the most responsible party-positions, in the Central Committee, which

makes the important decisions of policy, in the Control Committee, which passes on the qualifications of the individual members, and in the subordinate administrative organs of the party down to the smallest factory and office *yachekas*, or groups.

The struggle to keep the party free from unworthy elements has been incessant ever since the success of the Revolution brought with it the opportunities and the moral dangers of power. The fight against Tsarism, against Kerensky, against the flock of White generals who carried on the civil war, awakened and drew into the Communist ranks many workers and peasants who had previously been politically indifferent, but who were won over to the Communist side when the Revolution was no longer a matter of theory and underground plotting, but of clear, open fighting. Along with these honest recruits, however, the party attracted some very doubtful individuals who welcomed the opportunity for disorder and loot. In the strain and excitement of the civil war it was impossible to subject new members to any very rigorous examination. As a result, the party for a time grew with suspicious rapidity, losing in purity more than it gained in numbers. This development was soon observed by the old revolutionists who control the administrative machinery of the party; and in the spring of 1921 a wholesale "cleansing" of the party, designed to eliminate the suspicious elements, was carried out with such vigour that about a quarter of the total membership was expelled.

Now the danger to the party-morale does not come from the infiltration of disorderly and criminal individuals. The tests of admission are strict, and involve a long period of probation. The present menace to the moral basis of the Communist dictatorship is of a more subtle nature. Membership in the party is the only road to power in Russia. It is inevitable that many careerists, who have not the least interest in communism or in any other idealistic form of society, should seek admission for reasons of purely personal ambition. Russia's tradition of Oriental corruption in politics and business is a powerful aid to these careerists once they find themselves in power. Wherever one goes in Russia one encounters cases where bribery and speculation in office are being exposed and punished. On the day when I arrived in Vladikavkaz, the capital of one of the little Caucasian republics, the president of the local Commissariat for Foreign Trade had been sentenced to death for bribery. In Baku a number of persons, including one or two Communists, were on trial, charged with misusing funds which had been appropriated for the purpose of fighting the locust plague in some of the famine-areas. In Bokhara a number of commissars had just been put out of the Government and expelled from the party on the ground that they had used their positions, in true Asiatic style, chiefly for the purpose of enriching themselves.

A more dramatic and important case came up in Moscow last fall. The head of one of Russia's few banks, a Communist who had held various important posts in the course of the Revolution, was arrested on the charge of having diverted part of the bank's funds to the promotion of private building-enterprises that were being carried out by his brother. The bank president had already incurred the enmity of the Control Committee of the party by his extravagant and luxurious living. At last accounts he was in prison, awaiting trial.

These are only typical incidents in the constant struggle to keep the party free from graft and careerism, to make out of it an honest instrument for the

achievement of the working-class revolution. At times this struggle seems almost hopeless. Even with the strictest discipline and control it is difficult to maintain in the present ruling party the austere idealism of the former persecuted revolutionists. At times one is tempted to share Mr. Bertrand Russell's apprehensions that the psychological obstacles to the realization of communism in Russia will prove even more formidable than the obvious material difficulties that the heroic old revolutionists will gradually die off and find successors in a new race of bureaucrats.

But there are, I think, more hopeful factors that must be taken into account in surveying the future of Russian communism. Many of the most discouraging developments in Russian political and economic life are directly traceable to the inevitable inexperience of a revolutionary party that recruited most of its members from oppressed classes which had no opportunity to acquire administrative training or technical knowledge. Anyone who has probed even a little distance below the surface of Russia's industrial structure must have come in contact with two types which are the bane of the country's efforts at reconstruction. There is the amiable comrade with a beard, an excellent revolutionary record and a thorough knowledge of Marx, who is simply temperamentally unfitted for practical work in the fields of commerce and industry. There is the hard-headed *spets* or expert, who does know how to run a factory or to make a trading-enterprise pay, but who is far more interested in filling his own pockets than in serving the interests of the State. The well-meaning incompetence of the first type and the misdirected competence of the second often play havoc with the scanty resources of the nationalized industries and other State undertakings.

The Soviet Government recognizes its present lack of trained and reliable economic administrators, and is attempting to remedy the situation by practically placing the whole educational apparatus of the country at the disposal of the working class. In spite of the poverty of the Government a large number of "rab-facs" or workers' high-schools have been created, and the universities are already being crowded with rab-fac graduates. Nowhere does one realize the fact of the Revolution more concretely than in a high-school or university class-room. Here, instead of the children of merchants and aristocrats, one finds metal- and textile-workers and miners, men and women of different ages, but all united by the will to learn. Anyone who has seen these proletarian students at work must concede their earnestness and devotion; and it is not unreasonable to expect that out of the ranks of this new working-class intelligentsia, a peculiar product of the Revolution, the Soviet Government will obtain the trained and loyal experts of whom it stands so much in need.

There is another very marked development in present-day Russia that is likely to be significant in determining the course of future events. The Russian people to-day are interested in anything rather than in politics. Conversation centres around music and art, around literature and science, around anything in preference to politics. The Soviet Government is intensely disliked in many circles, partly because of the hard times through which the country has passed and is passing, partly because of the many bitter memories which were left behind by the civil war. But its severest critics are apt to shrug their shoulders if one asks them for alternative political programmes of their own. The little groups of Mensheviks, Social Revolutionists and Anarchists which are still carrying on underground work in Russia are eloquent in point-

ing out real and alleged abuses and mistakes of the Soviet power; but when it is a question of formulating constructive alternative suggestions they usually fall back on phrases.

This a-political orientation is especially characteristic of the younger generation that has grown up during the six years of the Soviet regime. The Russian non-Communist youth is much more inclined than its elders to accept the Revolution as an accomplished fact, to overlook its blunders, to welcome its promise. In this connexion I recall an open-air performance of Meierhold's revolutionary pageant, "The World Upside Down," in a Moscow park last fall. The pageant is a vivid representation of revolutionary scenes and types: the soldiers discussing whether they shall go on with the war, the strutting generals who try to drive them back to the front with whips, the delegations of tame Allied socialists which urge the continuance of the fighting. Towards the end of the pageant an assassin's bullet cuts down one of the revolutionary leaders. A woman worker urges the mourners at the grave "to go forth and build up the new Russia." At this point, as the orchestra played the impressive traditional revolutionary funeral march, the audience spontaneously rose. This was no stage-managed demonstration. The audience was made up not of Communists, but of young people out for a holiday. Their act was only symbolic of the general disposition of the non-partisan Russian youth to accept the Revolution and work with it, rather than against it.

Given first the present indifference of the Russian people to politics and, second, the disposition of the Soviet Government to remove one of the chief incentives to political factionalism by eliminating the factor of private monopolistic ownership in land, basic industries and natural resources, it is possible, if not probable, that Russia will develop an altogether new type of State along non-political lines. With a few more years of evolution it may well come about that the Russian people will rub their eyes some morning and find out that, instead of experiencing the ruthless dictatorship of a political party, they are living in a State that has shed its political coat altogether and that is functioning chiefly as an organ of economic administration. In Russia's present stage of development this tentative forecast can only be a hypothesis; but I think it is a hypothesis which deserves serious consideration.

WILLIAM HENRY CHAMBERLIN.

EDWIN MUIR AND FRANCIS GEORGE SCOTT:

A CONVERSATION.

SCOTT.

AFTER the concert last night I was still not quite sure about that song-cycle of Schönberg's. It is perfect in what it attempts; and it is all sustained on one key, and that is not an easy thing to accomplish. A greater man would have found it impossible to remain for such a long time on the same key. He could have done it theoretically, for his power would have been sufficient. But he could not have done it in reality, because common sense, or the lyrical impulse, or whatever you call it, would have broken in and would have varied the mood. He would have asked himself, Why am I doing this, this in particular and nothing else? and he would have widened the basis of his cycle.

MUIR.

I believe you are right, F. G., though you must acknowledge that what you say goes against your preference for French literature. The French have poisoned

us all with the itch for unity. I must confess—though it is shocking—that I have always found myself a little unconsciously ironical in reading "Madame Bovary," marvellous work as it is and much as I admire it. I always feel that at any moment what you call common sense may break in and raise "Madame Bovary" to the first rank in literature, and disturb the inexorable tenor of the story, and destroy its unity of mood. What a relief that would be! as great a relief as seeing a rare vase splintered to pieces after years of anxiety lest it should be splintered to pieces. I have a gross suspicion, F. G., about both you and myself. The thing which makes you not take Schönberg seriously, and what makes me not take "Madame Bovary" seriously, is a fundamental lack of reverence for art; for these are art, art distilled and concentrated, as it were, until there is nothing else left. We have an essential lack of reverence for art—a very rare quality in this age.

SCOTT.

You have more reverence for art than you think, Muir. Why, you admire the Germans, who have always put reverence between them and art. You object to my liking for the French, but there is a very good reason why the French should be liked. They know what's what; and they know it not, like other races, in flashes but habitually. They are aware that art is one thing and life another, and they do not try to crush into art *das Ganze, das Geheimnis, die Seele, der Zeitgeist*, and on top of all that a *Weltanschauung*. They are too much in earnest to be reverential. You said last evening that you thought French writers must work far harder at their craft than English or German ones, seeing that their form is so much more inevitable and finished. But that is not it. They do not work harder than we do; they think more closely. They always know what they are doing, and in art that is an uncommon thing. Flaubert's problem in "Madame Bovary" was to get a certain effect, and he took good care that he obtained it. He obtained other effects in "Salammbô" and "Bouvard et Pécuchet." It was a matter purely of seeing his end concretely and using the best means for attaining it. When an artist reaches that stage he sees the whole problem too clearly to be capable of reverence; for it is impossible for a man to stand in awe of the effects he gets when he knows exactly how he produced them. French artists are behind the scenes the whole time—exactly where they should be; and they are more like actors than the artists of other nations. They know that art is *artificiel*, a word that in French, and quite rightly, has a far more respectable meaning than our "artificial." They know what to do to produce the phenomenon people call beauty, while they live among the means, which are themselves no more beautiful than the stage-properties seen from behind. They know this, simply because it is their business. It seems to me that French art is the most fundamentally irreverent art there is.

MUIR.

Yes, F. G., I acknowledge that French art is irreverent, but it is not irreverent towards art. I can imagine a French poet regarding a really beautiful verse he has manufactured and smiling ironically, as Wordsworth could not have done, or Goethe either. But afterwards he will take art with enormous seriousness. He will acknowledge that it is a convention, but about this convention he will be more solemn than the most solemn German poet. German poetry has become much more serious since Stephan George began to Frenchify it; quite that solemnity it never had before. And then how much in earnest the French have taken the matter of form! They narrowed and conventionalized their whole literature for two centuries, and ours for one, by their deadly serious-

ness about form. They are doing so still, not in France only, but all over Europe. You can see the influence of France in Schönberg's adherence to one emotional key in his song-cycle. You can see it everywhere: in the conventionalization of the novel in England, in the conventionalization of the forms of unconventional verse, in the general blossoming of schools, which exist only for the sake of settling a form before it is practised and made alive. Is it not so? Well, all this I call taking art with intense and disproportionate seriousness. Our people, the artless Scots, thank God, could do nothing of the kind. Is it conceivable that any audience in London, in Dublin, or in Edinburgh, would stop a dramatic performance because the corresponding English word for *mouchoir* was used instead of the corresponding English word for *tissu*? No; our race, praise be to God, are not cursed with a sense of literary style. But, seriously, in all this inviolable respect for unity, propriety and so forth, what becomes of your common sense, and the man who shows his greatness by letting it break through?

SCOTT.

Oh, there is a great deal to be said on both sides. After all, even if art is limited, that is no reason why it should not be taken seriously. If you have a concern for art, it must be a serious concern; and if you are an artist, that is all the French require of you. You desire a beauty as perfect and accomplished as possible, they say. Very well, then; you must take with deadly seriousness the rules of your art; and when you have done your utmost—and this you must do—when you have fulfilled the most exacting demands of your art, you must not imagine that you have worked a miracle; no, at the best, you have only accomplished a work of art. You have not put all life into this work. It is not a scripture—a religion, philosophy and life, rolled into one. No, it is a literary work; and if you feel inclined you are perfectly at liberty to smile ironically at it. But take the Germans! They want art to be everything; they want it to be mystical, a three-in-one of religion, philosophy and art; but if it is to be everything why should it exist at all, seeing that everything exists already? They assert that art is a function of life, and of everybody's life; not knowing that it is something to be learned, and so difficult that we call genius the capacity to learn it. No, art is not a function of everybody's life, nor a necessary category—I am sick of such phrases—for people could get along quite well if Shakespeare and Beethoven had never been born. There is no doubt of it, Muir! We who have an obsession for art—and I do not wish to lose it—"imagine" lots of things. We habitually think it has a far wider significance than it has really; and because it has become necessary to us we imagine that other people suffer because they are bereft of it; but that is all German-English hallucination. Keep a strict notion of art, as the French do; think of it always concretely, the totality of the works of art which have been produced; and you will be saved from such gross errors against proportion and fact.

MUIR.

Certainly the Germans have written a lot of nonsense about art, and, when it comes to that, about everything. But why? Because they have tried to find answers to questions which the French, and the classical peoples generally, have never been much concerned with. I mean such questions as, Why should a man wish to create a work of art at all? Why, if it is merely a personal satisfaction for him, should it give pleasure to other people? What is beauty, an affirmation or a denial of life? On such themes, seeing that they are ultimate, as much nonsense was bound to be written as there has been written about metaphysics. Yet you do not escape from

these questions by saying that art, on the one hand, is the totality of works of art, and that mankind, on the other, can live perfectly well without them; for you establish no connexion between these two raw facts, and we know that there is a connexion. I do not deny that this may be roughly the French attitude to the problem; but it seems to me to be founded on a particularly hard and unsatisfying dogma.

SCOTT.

Leave it at that, then. All our attitudes are founded on unsatisfying dogmas. Even the German attitude is founded on a dogma, although it is one which they have not discovered yet. What does that mean? It means that the German dogma is wasteful and uncertain, while the French dogma is economical and sure.

MUIR.

No, F. G. It means that the French are easily satisfied, and that the Germans are not. The French do not ask the questions I mentioned; because they know they are unanswerable, you may say: but who are they that they should know? At any rate, answerable or unanswerable, it is a sign of vitality that these questions should be asked. What is wastefulness here? An effusion of the spirit, a sign that there is a superfluity of spirit to be exercised. But, when I regard it more closely, I deny that there is waste at all in such things; for if a man is of mean intellect he writes meanly on any subject at all, whatever it may be, even economics; and if he is a great spirit, then he writes profitably even if it is on a subject so apparently impossible as the meaning of art. But we are getting away from the point that interested me most, your notion that people can get along quite well without art. In what sense precisely did you mean it?

SCOTT.

Oh, I had in mind the most ordinary idea. Common people live their lives; are born, breathe, see people being born and dying around them; have now and then pain, joy, thoughts of death and of what is beyond it for them; know all the passions; are visited with remorse; have intuitions just as a poet has. Well, that is life; that is all of it. Ordinary people who live their lives just as life is given to them bear the full burden of the mystery in common with all of us. We pity them, or we despise them a little; but what we always forget is that they live.

MUIR.

They do not live very much, F. G. Just consider what I have seen with my own eyes on my way here to Salzburg. There were two Americans and an Englishman in the next carriage, and they were talking so loud that the whole corridor could hear them. What were they talking about, do you think? The different regulations under which a man can be hanged or otherwise put out of the way legally in America and in England. They were patriotic, I can assure you; they each claimed for his own country a precedence in the matter of hanging. The honour of two Great Powers was at stake, and they felt it keenly. But though they quarrelled excitedly, they were agreed in one thing; in their detestation of the criminal, and in their wish that there should be more executions. Well, accept the problem even on a level as low as that! What did these people comprehend when they used terms such as hanging? Hardly anything at all. They were quite incapable of imagining the agony of a man shut up in his cell counting the dwindling hours until he is taken out, blind-folded and—it disgusts me too much to proceed. It is the same with the other experiences which you say they have like the rest of us. They are incapable of comprehending the suffering of the world, and they are unable to partake in its joy, except in that kind which is physical. I say so confidently, for art is the rarest common fund

of joy in which man can learn to partake; it is the spiritual principle and expression of joy; and if a man passes his life entirely oblivious of it, then we should pity him, as we pity a man who can not run. But I have turned back to art inadvertently. You say rightly that men see birth and death around them, that they feel pain, passion and remorse, and have intuitions. So they do; but all the same their life is an attempt to hide these things away, and not to see them, not to acknowledge intuitions—for intuitions are as disturbing as a conviction of sin. What is the final end of this? That birth, death, pain and guilt become mere names to these people, artificial as the phraseology of fashion; and they have no concrete image, no experience, for they feverishly forget their experiences, to set against these things. These are names only, and so people can light-heartedly talk of hanging, and can tolerate and approve a thousand evils which, had they imagination—that is, were they capable of the high kind of enjoyment to be found in art—they could neither tolerate nor approve. No, F. G.; the important thing is not that we should have life—though that is essential—but that we should have it abundantly. Life is a frightfully common thing; everybody has it—a fact, as you say, generally forgotten. It is the other that is important, and therefore to us, constituted as we are, valuable.

SCOTT.

Did I not say, Muir, that you had far more reverence for art than you thought? Here you are, setting up art, whether you know it or not, as a sort of religious principle, a kind of enjoyment which is not of this life; taking life, in your own words, to be a very common thing, as no doubt it is. But you are wrong. To me art is a thing to be enjoyed like everything else; like a street-scene, a conversation such as this, a finely proportioned tree, or a glimpse of these mountains seen from the train between here and Innsbruck. To tell you the truth, I think perfectly ordinary people enjoy these things too. They observe more habitually than we do who live in a cloud of ideas; they see landscapes and incidents very clearly, and enjoy them all the more because they do not stop to note their feelings. It may be that to them birth, death, pain and remorse are only names, but, seriously, does that matter so very much? Birth and death are, after all, things which do not concern us vitally; at least, our own birth and our own death do not; and why should we be more troubled by the fate of other people than by our own? These are not the real business of life, but only its beginning and its end; and everything lies between them. Absolutely everything! It is natural, too, of course, to forget pain and remorse; and not only that, but it is the best course if we are to live with fortitude. The poet remembers them, but that is because he can do nothing else. Every artist groans under a curse, and art is the blessing that is vouchsafed him to make it tolerable. But ordinary people do not suffer under the disease, so why should they be in need of the remedy? And, as I say, outside these categories in which we think and feel far too much, there is a great deal left to them: there is everything, I often think, except the categories. Sometimes I am made sad by the thought of how much happiness there is in the world, and there quite inevitably and naturally, so that you can do nothing with it, and neither fight against it nor advance it, any more than you can fight for or against the procession of the seasons.

MUIR.

Yet, F. G., you would not have this sense of the richness of ordinary life if you were what you call an ordinary man. You would not write your music, and it would not be so soundly and magnificently Scottish, for this attitude of yours I am convinced is characteristically Scot-

tish. I doubt if you would exchange your vision of the unconscious and beautiful happiness of ordinary people for the thing itself, which would necessarily exclude the vision. That brings me to the point which it seems to me you have avoided: that art infinitely widens our field of experience, making us live not merely within our skins, like your unconscious happy man, but in mankind, sharing their sorrows and joys vicariously in a way beyond the reach of moralists and reformers. This widening of experience is made possible partly by the use of the categories you speak of, that is, such concepts as birth, death, pain, guilt, and so forth; but these are only the means, and as little beautiful as means generally are, and the emotional experience is a thing totally unlike them, and as pure and beautiful as the joys which you attribute to the natural life of men. But they are also more spacious and more impersonal; they can be communicated on a large scale; and they are capable of humanizing mankind more than any personal joy growing in its place. All happiness, I admit, whatever kind it may be, humanizes us, even the happiness of rascals and tyrants; and a happy man has an influence on every one he meets which can not be computed, though Browning has spoiled the idea for us. But that is a thing which we can not argue about, for we have nothing but our feelings to refer to. But we can recognize the difference in range between a feeling of joy expressed in a work of art—"joy in widest commonalty spread"—and the modest happiness of a man living in a private world. And art does disseminate joy, and in doing so humanizes us; and when I speak of art as doing that I do not mean art in the sense in which you, and according to you the French, speak of it. I mean art as it is felt in the works of the very greatest men, whom all the world would acknowledge to be kin, such as Shakespeare, Molière, Goethe and our own Burns. I mean especially the art where common sense or the lyrical impulse breaks through, for that is what humanizes art, as it is what æstheticises humanity in the rough. That brings me back to your first remark, which interested me most of all, that a greater artist disturbs the tenor of a work by breaking in with common sense; for that showed me exactly where my reverence lies. My reverence is not for art in itself, nor for your artless life as it is, but for the significant point where they meet and as it were interpenetrate each other.

SCOTT.

Well, thank God, we can agree about something at last. I acknowledge that your point is the solution of the riddle, for that gives art a meaning, which is what we have been seeking for; and art, too, in its turn, though in a secondary degree, gives meaning back to life—though life, it seems to me, does not need it very much. But that, I imagine, is where we shall never agree, so let us leave it over. What I meant by common sense was, I fancy, more exactly a sense of proportion, the feeling of the artist that, having given a certain mood of life prominence, he must bring the others in also. He must get as much life into art as possible, and make it as sound as life. Now Leopardi, for instance, whom you admire, had a marvellous mind; he hardly ever set down an observation which does not strike one as true; yet I can not read him at any time without feeling that his constant observation of life from one point of view makes him just a little ridiculous. There were a thousand other ways of looking at existence, and he stuck persistently to one. A work of art, the more perfect it is, the more it is divorced from life, tends to give one more and more a vision of life from one single point of view, like Leopardi's; sticking to that point of view, even although it is the most difficult thing in the world, for the sake of preserving artistic unity; and not recognizing that this

artistic unity is humanly sometimes a little ridiculous. That is what makes me take Leopardi not quite seriously, although I know he was in deadly earnest; and it is what, I fancy, makes your appreciation of "Madame Bovary" not quite unconditional. But all this does not mean that a man, supposing himself inspired, is at liberty to set down anything that comes into his head, on the chance that it may be true or beautiful, but really not knowing anything about it. So I still like the French for knowing what they mean, and, as artists, for knowing what they do. They are right; but so, on the other hand, is the man who breaks up a convention, or the unity of a book, from a sense of proportion, and to get in more life. There is nothing that can be said against him then, for when he does that he is like a force of nature, and it would be as idle to condemn him as it would be to condemn the lightning for falling here after a fortnight's uninterrupted sunshine. But that is common sense and nothing more; and you will not persuade me that there is any mystical German theory needed to explain it.

MUIR.

I shall not attempt it, for I am content with what you say. Shakespeare showed his greatness in the thing for which he has been condemned so often, his introduction of comic relief into his tragedies, and in his most exalted scenes knew how and where to sink, his sense of proportion never failing him. Perhaps he did this inevitably and without thinking about it; but Goethe, who had theorized much about art, did it deliberately in "Faust," introducing the Cellar Scene to lower and enrich the severe opening of his tragedy. These are the two writers who in modern times have shown the greatest command of life. But as I listened to you it seemed that an explanation of all the great blossoming times of European literature had nearly flown into my hands. I can not explain it clearly at the moment, for it always seems to be fluttering just outside my reach, but it is something like this. All the great literatures of Europe have been written by Northern races when they have encountered in one form or another the shock of the South. The fair-haired Greeks were obviously Northern people, and they saw the beginning of European literature, for the Bible is not a European book, and no one has felt it to be so, or has treated it as we treat Shakespeare or Homer. The Renaissance in Italy was the belated outcome of the successive invasions of barbarians which swept away the Roman Empire. France is a sort of synthesis of North and South, but most of its great writers have come from the north, or from some part not distinctively Southern. England and Germany are almost purely Northern; but they did not begin to blossom into literature until in one way or another they came into the atmosphere of Southern culture, and the German *Sehnsucht* for the South is the sign of a racial need. The North can not do without the South in some form; but nevertheless it is the Northern peoples who have been the productive agents in all these literatures; the Southern races have been the passive element; they have merely given the condition of productivity, that is, a profound and deeply sunk-in culture. But that is not all; for the Northern peoples correspond to your man who lets common sense break through; they are the inartistic race who produce art; while the Southern peoples are instinctive artists concerned with form and with artistic unity, but producing very little. If you examine the history of Europe, you will be at a loss to find any great body of literature whose creative body came from the South. It is almost all the work of the Northern peoples. So there, very roughly, for I have not scrutinized it yet myself, you have your upsetting, common-sense principle revealed as the agent behind every great

blossoming of literature. Probably it is a question of race in the end. What do you think of it?

SCOTT.

I really do not know. Your theory requires a great deal of evidence, and we have none. Perhaps there is something in it.

EDWIN MUIR.

MUSIC.

MUNICH, 1922 AND 1923.

THE Munich summer-festival of operas by Wagner and by Mozart had become one of the world's recognized musical institutions when war interrupted its annual recurrence in 1914. The Wagnerian side of the festivals, in particular, had gone so far toward recovering for Munich what Munich had voluntarily lost decades before through the stupid expulsion of Wagner, that Bayreuth grew seriously concerned over the formidable rivalry of the city on the Isar—a rivalry that dared even to erect in the Prinz-Regenten Theater a *Festspielhaus* that was a younger and better twin of Bayreuth's own—and the Wagner dynasty enthroned in Wahnfried, if as yet it felt not positively imperilled, must at least have passed some quarter-hours of very serious thinking.

When the war was at last over, it was evident that the annual opera-festival had fallen on a unique chance. Munich still possessed her paramount tradition of Mozart, and she possessed, further, the ideal house for the Mozart operas in the little rococo Residenz Theater, where the intimate proportions make possible the employment of the small orchestra of Mozart's day, and where the revolving stage accomplishes without interruption of the musical current the frequent changes of scene that Mozart makes. The outlook for Wagner, too, was even brighter than for Mozart, since, with Bayreuth locked in a *post-bellum* sleep that seemed an interlude to death, the festival performances of Wagner at Munich now had an absolutely clear field.

For the resumption of the Munich opera festival, covering the months of August and September, 1922, Bruno Walter, who had succeeded to the general musical directorship of the Bavarian theatres only a few months before the outbreak of the war, accordingly designed a particularly broad and interesting programme. The Wagner selection was, as one might expect, "Tristan und Isolde," "Die Meistersinger," the four Ring-dramas, and "Parsifal"; all given, festival-wise, without cuts. The Mozart operas were "Die Entführung aus dem Serail," "Le Nozze di Figaro," "Don Giovanni," "Così fan tutte," and "Die Zauberflöte." But Herr Walter did not stop here. His plan included also a considerable, and for the most part a very happily chosen, selection of operas outside of Mozart and of Wagner.

Thus, he paid an appropriate tribute to the genius of Gluck by presenting his "Iphigenia in Aulis" (and artistically the production was incontestably the high-water mark of the entire festival). He had the delightful inspiration of combining in a triple bill three archaic works which have had their part in later developments of the lyric drama—two of them indisputably masterpieces, and the third, if not quite so much as that, still distinctly worth giving—Handel's pastoral "Acis and Galatea," Pergolesi's "intermezzo" (the parent seed of the Italian *opera buffa*), "La Serva Padrona," and third, "Der Dorfbarbier," an amusing little piece by Beethoven's harmony-teacher, Johann Schenk. Then Herr Walter advanced to the earlier romantic period of German opera, giving Weber's

"Euryanthe" and "Oberon." Next he jumped to the modern Germans, emphasizing, naturally enough, a man who is in a special sense a Munich composer, though no longer resident in Munich, Richard Strauss, by presenting "Der Rosenkavalier," "Ariadne auf Naxos" (like the Mozart works and the archaic triptych, given in the ideal setting of the Residenz Theater), and a double bill of the opera "Feuersnot" and the pantomime-ballet "Josephs Legende."

There were likewise two operas by Munich composers of to-day, "Die Vögel" (after Aristophanes) by Walter Braunfels and "Palestrina" by Hans Pfitzner; works that apparently have a Bavarian, if not a universal, appeal. Finally, and of very special interest on the opera-list, was the "Corregidor" of the late Hugo Wolf, as revised by Herr Walter (Wolf was no man of the theatre), an opera which had disappeared from every stage save that of Munich and is not likely to be given anywhere again except when Herr Walter conducts it, though the score can boast many pages of a characteristically Wolfian loveliness. In addition to the operas, Herr Walter included in his programme two concerts, one devoted to Beethoven's Ninth Symphony, the other to Hans Pfitzner's romantic cantata, "Von deutscher Seele," with which the Society of the Friends of Music recently regaled New York.

Herr Walter himself was the conductor-in-chief of the festival, and his achievements in Mozart, with "Der Corregidor," and above all with the "Iphigenia in Aulis," were notable. He had a capable assistant in his second conductor, Robert Heger; and as guest-conductor Dr. Karl Muck led a Ring-cycle and some other performances that will not soon be forgotten by those privileged to hear them. The stage-productions were marked by the care and the artistic seriousness traditional to Munich. In particular, the new Pasetti-Linnebach scenery for the Ring proved interesting. As for the singers, their earnestness invariably commanded respect; and the contributions of such artists as Paul Bender, Fritz Feinhals, Karl Seydel (Munich's admirable comic tenor, who is quite incomparable as Mime, David, and the Pedrillo of "Die Entführung"), Sigrid Onegin, and, in certain of their rôles, Delia Reinhardt and Maria Ivogün, often aroused well earned enthusiasm.

With the end of the Munich festival of 1922, the directorship of Bruno Walter likewise ended. On the first of October, 1922, Hans Knappertsbusch, from the Stadt Theater of Dessau, succeeded Herr Walter as general music-director of the Bavarian theatres. It is an open secret that the reasons dictating this change were not artistic but solely political. Nobody denies that Bruno Walter fell a victim to the reactionary spirit that so paradoxically has pervaded the "republican" regime in Bavaria, with its repressive attitude toward any tendency it suspects of a socialistic colour, its militant nationalism, and its undissembled anti-semitism. The most curious part of the affair is that Herr Walter has never been accused of radical predilections or any kind of political activity; that, though born a Jew, he was baptised years ago, and that from January 1, 1914, till the Bavarian revolution, he held his office by appointment and with the full approval of a Wittelsbach monarch, who presided over the most Catholic court in the most Catholic capital of Europe!

Still, however unjust the turn in circumstances toward Herr Walter, the succession of Hans Knappertsbusch, blond, *echt-deutsch*, non-Bavarian (curiously) and reported very rich, could be accepted on purely artistic grounds if artistically the event had proved the wisdom of the change. One might also

readily overlook the gaps in Herr Knappertsbusch's scholarship if he showed himself a great instinctive musician. Schubert, in setting the Mass to music, blithely omitted some words from the "Credo." Handel remarked of Gluck that the latter knew as much about counterpoint as his cook—in spite of which failings Schubert and Gluck are justly regarded as major composers. But when the sinister shadow of political interference fell on the brave and open pathway of the Munich Festival, there was, alas! no compensating light of genius shed from the artistic taper of the new general music-director.

Professor Knappertsbusch (the Munich Akademie conferred the coveted title with unprecedented speed) of course planned and superintended the Munich opera-festival of August and September, 1923. The programme of this festival was somewhat narrower than last year's. The three little archaic pieces and the operas by Gluck, by Weber, by Wolf, and by Braunfels dropped from the repertory. So did the "Feuersnot" and the "Josephs Legende" of Strauss, and no concerts occurred in the programme. The Mozart operas for both lists were identical; "Palestrina" recurred; and after the several elisions, Professor Knappertsbusch picked out three works for this year that were not given last year. To the Wagner series he added "Tannhäuser," and to the two Strauss operas that he held over from the previous summer ("Der Rosenkavalier" and "Ariadne auf Naxos") he added "Salome" and "Elektra."

It is easy to say that Professor Knappertsbusch's programme might have been improved. The loss of "Iphigenia in Aulis," an artistic triumph under Herr Walter, is particularly regrettable, and the archaic triptych richly deserved retention. It would have been exceedingly interesting to find on the list Mozart's "Idomeneo" and "La Clemenza di Tito" as well as the more familiar Mozart operas. A brilliant performance of the Ninth Symphony can not but impart distinction to a festival. I hold no brief for the Pfitzner cantata "Von deutscher Seele"; and when it comes to the utter perfection of boredom in operatic form, Hans Pfitzner's "Palestrina" carries off first prize. However, Herr Pfitzner is now a Munich institution, and there are doubtless compelling local reasons for the continued presentation of his works.

For the selection of "Tannhäuser" as supplementary to the seven Wagner music-dramas that inevitably go on from year to year, there can be no such urgent grounds. Nor is the motive to be discovered in the performance itself, a respectably mediocre affair. But whatever the excuse, it was surprising, if unedifying, to us Americans to find the Munich management placing the seal of its approval on the custom, only too widespread in Germany, of presenting the Venusberg scene according to the original Dresden version of 1845, instead of in the greatly amplified and enriched version that Wagner made for the Paris production of 1861. The partisans of this return to the rudiments explain it on the ground of preserving "unity of style" with the rest of the opera. Possibly some like-minded purist will one day substitute for the love-scene in the second act of "Tristan und Isolde" the song "Träume," which anticipates a portion of it.

Be all that as it may, Professor Knappertsbusch, as a new man in an especially responsible and exacting position, might be granted without too much grumbling his own choice of repertory for his first festival, if the performances had proved of signal merit. In comparison with the previous summer, one exceedingly important element of the performances mani-

fested a rather shocking deterioration. I mean the orchestra. Such changes as had been made in its personnel seemed not to have been for the better, and carelessness about tuning, raggedness of attack, and general slovenliness in the playing, testified damagingly to a decline in discipline. Dr. Karl Muck is reported to have asked in pained surprise, "What has happened to the orchestra?" Fortunately Dr. Muck was engaged again as guest to conduct some of the festival operas, and in spite of the difficult conditions that he had to overcome, to hear his interpretations of the "Ring," of "Tristan und Isolde," of "Die Meistersinger," of "Parsifal," was a real artistic privilege.

The orchestral tradition for Mozart's operas in Munich is especially high; and it happens that quite the best of the orchestral performances directed by Professor Knappertsbusch that I heard was that of "Le Nozze di Figaro." With the more modern and abundant scoring of "Parsifal" and "Salome" he showed himself heavy-handed, merciless toward the singers, and deficient in the grasp of *tempo* that is essential to conducting of the first order. The orchestral question is of all the more importance in Munich because the singing-actors, conscientious workers though they generally are, as vocalists sometimes leave a great deal to be desired. This festival profited again by the collaboration of Frauen Onegin and Ivogün and Herren Bender, Feinhals and Seydel; and Anna Bahr-Mildenburg lent the glamour of her extraordinary impersonation of Clytemnestra to the really impressive representation of "Elektra." But, with the exception of Johanna Hesse, who had the name-part on that occasion, it is not easy to praise any of the new singers for very much besides the honourable nature of his or her intentions.

The festival of 1923 started off with the crowded houses that have always been the rule in all three of the theatres that the Munich festivals employ, the Prinz-Regenten, the National and the Residenz. But before the second week was over empty seats were espied in the two larger houses. Sudden upward leaps in the price of tickets and everything else in Munich had certainly something to do with the emptying of the theatres. But the increasing rumour of a decline in the quality of the performances was a more discouraging factor than the fluctuations of the valuta. Foreigners refused to strain their purses for the sake of an ill-cast, poorly rehearsed, ragged presentation of any opera, ancient or modern; and the Germans with the means to go saw no reason for paying festival-prices to hear performances no more distinguished than those of the regular winter-season. If the Munich festival is to survive year after year, as for several cogent reasons it should, Professor Knappertsbusch and his collaborators must bend all their energy to mending the deplorable error of its recent ways.

PITTS SANBORN.

THE THEATRE.

ROSES AND PRUNELLA.

It was apparent as soon as one entered the theatre, even before one came upon the formidable roster of patronesses folded in the programme, that the house had been commandeered for the occasion by a section of the population that is vulgarly called Society. Never before had the commentator found himself in a metropolitan playhouse in a company of such exclusively Nordic dignity and pulchritude. Had Mr. Albert Coyle of the *Locomotive Engineers Journal* and Mr. Oscar Ameringer of the *Illinois Miner* been present,

they would have been compelled to admit that in this land of democracy we do our upper classes exceeding well. An impish box-office person seated the reviewer in the midst of a cluster of the younger set, and while he composed himself like a strange toad in this brilliant environment and strove not to seem too ugly and venomous, the curtain rose on "Pelléas and Mélisande."

Perhaps because of a certain unreality in the audience, from the beginning M. Maeterlinck's shadowy characters seemed surprisingly real. They appeared less remote than they did, alas! these many years ago, when Miss Mary Garden loved and languished to the fluid mysticism of Debussy in a castle built by the intrepid Oscar Hammerstein of worthy memory. Perhaps the illusion of reality was enhanced by a somewhat relentless use of the spotlight in M. Maeterlinck's land of gloom. Possibly in the opera Debussy's elusive tones serve, even more than M. Maeterlinck's peculiar technique, to obliterate our worldly dimensions. At any rate the play seemed less pallid than the opera; and it is due to Miss Jane Cowl to remark that the instant she started up beside the spring when Golaud found her, one was certain that no princess in the audience was as exquisite and beautiful as she.

At this late day M. Maeterlinck's play, which in a more sentimental period enjoyed an almost hysterical regard, seems a bit over-elaborated. It has not worn well, as "Monna Vanna" has done, and the reasons are implicit in its quality. The author had discovered a pseudo-classical manner of suggestive simplicity, and he pursued it with more enthusiasm than discrimination. With it he employed a tenuous symbolism and prophetic choral parts. The method is not dissimilar from that adopted, with oriental variations, by Oscar Wilde in "Salome," which has reduced over-expectant audiences to the most abject boredom in every civilized country. It is an unnatural and hazardous method. Thus "Pelléas and Mélisande" is one of those dramatic efforts wherein at intervals the author is on the edge of that fatal step from the sublime of which the proverb gives warning. Indeed, one is not sure that on two or three occasions M. Maeterlinck was able to recover himself in time. As one of our critics has remarked, after Golaud in his burst of jealous rage has dragged Mélisande about by her hair and flung her violently upon the floor, it seems a bit inadequate to have her observe that she is unhappy. Perhaps, also, one is not unduly captious in believing that the author might have spared us the chorus of "psychic" serving women who foresee Mélisande's death.

Yet despite the period-leather and prunella, the play has its moments of naked passion and beauty. One would have to be either exceptionally dull-witted or calloused not to be moved by the emotional crescendo when Miss Cowl keeps her last tryst with Pelléas in the garden and shyly reveals her love, and presently, when the castle-gates shut them out from all refuge save each other's arms, her timidity flames into instant self-abandonment. Between her first faltering "I love thee too," to her cry "All the better! All the better! All the better!" when the gates close, and her lover's answering "All's lost; all's saved," only a brief dialogue intervenes, but into it is compressed the widest diapason of feeling. In this crowded passage Miss Cowl had the rare grace and spontaneity to seem not at all a lady in a play, but a princess of faery, compounded of spirit and fire and dew, and yet inspired with human wonder and pain and foreboding. The tableau, darkening quickly into the tragedy of Golaud's vengeful approach, held one in its spell, even

after the young woman of the younger set, two seats away, had broken the dialogue with a bass whisper, demanding: "Madge, let me have a chocolate." The next instant Pelléas lay dead and Mélisande fled like a wraith before the wrath of Golaud. "I'm glad he killed him," remarked the young man delicately scented by Kerkoff. "What a rotter! The wife of his own brother!" The girl with the pearl-coloured shoulders replied with spirit, "Aren't you mean! After all, he's the hero of the play." Thus, apparently, do art and morality contend in the bosoms of the best people.

For that one scene, and for the delicate tenderness of the episode where Pelléas comes upon Mélisande doing her hair for the night, one can all but forgive M. Maeterlinck's mummery. One can even forgive Miss Cowl for dying somewhat stagily in the finale. Any good actor, it is said, can live his part, but—if one may use the phrase—to die a part with decorum and dignity is a supreme test of the art of the stage, especially if the exigencies of the piece compel the actor to protract the business and subject it to the hazards of spoken words. In real life garrulous death-bed scenes are likely to be not a little ridiculous, because at that moment of awful transition articulate speech becomes inadequate and trivial. On the stage the only safe way is to get the agony over as quickly as the necessities of tragedy permit. Probably Miss Cowl did as well under the circumstances as she could, but it seemed a pity that the author compelled her to linger through a long anti-climax to exhibit Golaud's almost posthumous jealousy and self-torture.

It was a relief when the lights went up, and one beheld all about the unblanched faces of the younger set and heard their untroubled voices released in a sudden babble of chatter. The pearly shoulders were disappearing beneath the warm folds of a Paisley cloak. "I'm so depressed," remarked the young woman, "I feel as if I could die. Are we all going to the Ritz?"

HAROLD KELLOCK.

LETTERS TO THE EDITORS.

INDUSTRIAL LIBRARIES.

SIRS: In his discussion of information about unorthodox social theories and movements, available in the statistical departments of industrial corporations, "Journeyman" in the *Freeman* of 14 November expresses doubt whether such information is as readily available in America as in Europe.

Of the several concerns with which I have been connected, all of which maintained libraries, only one, E. F. Houghton & Company of Philadelphia, had such information available. The Houghton Company probably does not rank as a "great industrial corporation," although it does business with a majority of the countries engaged in mechanical industry; yet on the shelves of its somewhat limited library can be found several volumes on socialism and the labour-movement, and expositions of economic principles by authorities of various schools of economic thought. I am, etc.,

Oxford, Maryland.

MILLARD B. SIMMONS.

A FORTUNATE EXCEPTION.

SIRS: Your editorial in the *Freeman* of 14 November, entitled "The Way to Academic Freedom," prompts me to give you a brief account of conditions at Dartmouth which are not in accord with college policy elsewhere. At Dartmouth any group within the college has absolute freedom to invite anyone it wishes to speak to the college, and the administration does not interfere. The extent of this freedom is indicated by the fact that Scott Nearing spoke here on 27 February last year and William Z. Foster spoke here last Friday evening. Freedom of speech and discussion is a part of the traditions of Dartmouth College, and it is inconceivable that any professor should be "fired" for expressing rad-

ical opinions. It would seem, therefore, that academic freedom can become a reality in American colleges, in spite of "interlocking directorates," if an intelligent policy be pursued by the administration and if freedom can be ingrained in the very traditions of the institution. I am, etc.,

Hanover, New Hampshire.

ROLAND A. GIBSON.

M. POINCARÉ'S POSITION.

SIRS: In the *Freeman* of 28 November, page 269, I note that you refer to M. Poincaré as "a very able jurist in an impregnable legal position."

I am quite unable to see how M. Poincaré's invasion of the Ruhr can rightly be called "legal" under the terms of the Treaty of Versailles.

I believe that M. Poincaré claims the right to invade the Ruhr under Part VIII, Annex 2, sect. 18: "The measures which the Allied and Associated Powers shall have the right to take, in case of voluntary default by Germany, and which Germany agrees not to regard as acts of war, may include economic and financial prohibitions and reprisals and in general such other measures as the respective Governments may determine to be necessary in the circumstances."

It is very debatable whether this section gives any one of the Allies the right of separate action. Moreover, it is a well established legal principle that a clear, explicit statement controls an obscure one. Now in Part XIV, sect. I, we find five articles which set forth in detail and very clearly just what German territory shall be occupied by the Allies to insure the carrying out of the treaty, just how this territory shall be evacuated, and how it may be reoccupied in case Germany shall default.

Why set down all this, if Part VIII, Annex 2, sect. 18 gives France *carte blanche*? I am, etc.,

Belleville, Pennsylvania.

R. M. BEACH.

In the issue preceding the one which our correspondent quotes, at November, p. 244, we had already dealt with the point raised in this letter.—EDITORS.

TWO CORRECTIONS.

SIRS: In my letter concerning Mayor Gaynor which appeared in the *Freeman* of 28 November, all the figures quoted from the Bingham annual police-report are wrong and meaningless. The number of arrests for the year should be 450,000 instead of 450; the number of crimes and misdemeanours should be 50,000 instead of 50; the decrease in the number of arrests should be 100,000 instead of 100.

If the error is mine I blush, and if the error is yours I blush equally. I am, etc.,

New York City.

ERNEST COOK.

SIRS: In fairness to a number of people, will you please correct an error in Mr. H. L. Stuart's review of Mr. Villard's book, which appeared in the *Freeman* of 5 December? The remarks of "Kenelm Digby" to which Mr. Stuart refers, on the abuse in merchandising-copy of the canting word "service," were quoted by "Kenelm Digby" from "Bunk," by W. E. Woodward. I am, etc.,

New York City.

MERRILL ANDERSON.

MONOPOLY.

SIRS: Why is it that, notwithstanding the marvellous increase of the power of the producer to produce the things essential for the satisfaction of individual wants and the gratification of individual desires, the share of the producer tends to an irreducible minimum?

Why is it that, although the co-operation of individuals in the production of the things essential for the satisfaction of individual wants and the gratification of individual desires tends to decrease the cost of production, the price tends to increase indefinitely?

Why is it that, although the cost of transporting a ton of coal from Port Carbon to Philadelphia, a distance of 108 miles, is less than five cents a ton, the price of transportation is \$3.85? By reason of improvement in methods and tools, improved systems of ventilation, hauling, hoisting, pumping, etc., the cost of producing coal has been largely reduced; why is it that the price of coal is higher than it was fifty years ago?

Before the Philadelphia and Reading Company got control of the Schuylkill Canal, coal was shipped from Port Carbon to Philadelphia in rude canal-boats of one hundred tons capacity for forty cents a ton. A committee of the Senate of Pennsylvania investigated the coal-trade in 1834, and the following is an extract from the report of their findings:

"Coal during the past and present seasons has been hauled in sleds and wagons from the district, a distance of eighty miles and upwards, into the State of New York and sold in some instances for \$20 a ton. The ironworks of Mr. Williams of Jamestown is now supplied with Lackawanna and Mauch Chunk coal which is transported from the City of New York to Albany, 160 miles, from Albany to Buffalo, 300 miles, and thence hauled in wagons to Jamestown, 70 miles. If we add the distance from Carbondale to New York, 217 miles, we have a total distance of 747 miles from the mines to the place of consumption."

The price of coal to-day is as high in Jamestown, New York, as it was ninety years ago, when it was carried a distance of 747 miles.

What is the cause? What is the remedy? I am, etc.,
Washington, D. C. THOMAS F. MONAHAN.

THE LABOUR-BANKS.

SIRS: It is pleasing to note that the *Freeman* seems now more than ever inclined to appreciate that co-operation can do much for the emancipation of the working classes; but it would appear that the *Freeman* does not recognize that one of the essential features of co-operative enterprises consists in the fact that they are not subject to control by majority stockholders. Therefore, the *Freeman* seems to mistake the new kind of labour-banks that has sprung up in this country for truly co-operative enterprises. What distinguishes these banks from other strictly labour- and *bona-fide* co-operative banks which have existed abroad for decades is that the public is cordially invited to furnish to the unions in firm control of these allegedly co-operative banks plenty of money, some of which, one may fear, will be used to further the cause of the majority stockholders at the expense of that part of the public whose legitimate interests are injured by the tactics of certain unions.

Credit-power is derived from the possession of property, and two-thirds of the population of this country own about five per cent of the total national wealth. This does not preclude these weaker parties from making some headway by using their credit-power concertedly in their own interest; but it hardly warrants those visions of greatly improved social conditions which labour-banks apparently cause in the minds of many persons.

Might it not, therefore, be advisable for certain labour-unions to avoid rendering a distinct service to the evil powers—that be by unduly magnifying the importance of labour-banks and thereby distracting public attention for a long time from the necessity of fighting monopoly by all means at the disposal of the economically outlawed members of society? I am, etc.,

New York City.

OTTO MASS.

OUR view of these banks has always been precisely the same as our correspondent's, and we are therefore both surprised and sorry to find that we have somehow given him an erroneous impression.—EDITORS.

A COURTEOUS DEMURRER.

SIRS: I read each week in your paper, always with interest, sometimes with amusement and occasionally with surprise, the various criticisms which you publish concerning my country, its Premier and its policy. I perfectly understand that this policy should not meet with your approval, since it was intended to have ours. I am, furthermore, appreciative of the spirit and manner in which your disapproval is expressed; it is singularly and delightfully free of cant. It is for this reason that I am both surprised and shocked at your assuming, however indirectly, some measure of responsibility for the suggestion that we are deserving of such "cruel and unusual punishment" (is this not the admirable phrase made use of in your Constitution?) as to be governed by such a one as was Lord Palmerston.

I am prepared to concede that we French are indeed a deplorable and generally immoral people, without "the good

sense and honesty" so characteristic of yourselves, the British and all other Nordics, but are we really so depraved as to require a Lord Palmerston as your viceroy? Can not you foresee that the *bon mots*, the production of which is to be our national destiny, would almost inevitably find in such a vice-regal Excellency their chief butt? From *lèse majesté* to revolution is but a step in frivolous France. Could you not send us some less characteristic example of your *esprit positif*?

You and the British and the Germans are now so well supplied with honourable and sagacious statesmen, excellently fitted for the hard task of governing us, that for you to go beyond these and seek a prototype of Palmerston savours of an exoticism almost Mediterranean. It is unworthy of your six-foot, blond and blue-eyed forbears.

I have the honour to be, Gentlemen, your most obedient and respectful subject-to-be,

A FRENCHMAN.

BOOKS.

THE REVIVAL OF ÆSTHETICISM.

AMONG literary phenomena nothing is more pitiful than to see a comparatively new, young and untried group of writers exercising their talents on a theory of art that gives no scope for anything more than a disillusioned æstheticism. It is a paradox of life that beauty, like happiness, if directly aimed at, eludes us; and the artist who makes beauty unsupported by thought his sole aim inevitably writes incidental trifles, *parerga*. Barely ten years ago, the world began to interest itself in the new poetry that was coming out of America; it is ten thousand pities that not only have the new poets of America failed to give to the world a single unquestionable masterpiece, but that the most advanced and in some ways the most interesting of them, have become prematurely disillusioned æsthetes, lacking in mental and moral orientation. Whether this state of affairs has resulted from the European war, or whether the imagists with their blind dislike of didacticism have been mainly responsible, future historians will have to decide; what is certain is that in America, as well as throughout Europe, the poets of the present day are proudly displaying all the signs of a premature senility. In Europe this senility takes the form of a preference for Petronius or Apuleius above Lucretius or Catullus; in America, the cult of Beardsley, Pater, George Moore and the 'nineties generally, seems to be in for a definite revival.

Mr. Wallace Stevens¹ is an æsthete, but he is at all events an honest æsthete. The careful reader—and Mr. Stevens demands careful reading, if not many readings—can readily ascertain that Mr. Stevens is definitely out of tune with life and with his surroundings, and is seeking an escape into a sphere of finer harmony between instinct and intelligence. That he does seek for this speaks much for his integrity as an artist; what speaks even more clearly is the fact that of all the purely æsthetic artists of to-day, he wields the finest and most distinguished weapon of style. Any reader who will take the trouble to compare "Le Monocle de Mon Oncle" or "Sunday Morning" with Mr. T. S. Eliot's "Waste Land," or the best work of the Sitwells, or even M. Paul Valéry's "Jeune Parque," will realize that Mr. Stevens need fear no comparisons with these internationally famous writers. He is head and shoulders above them all. It is true that he, like these others, is an obscure

¹"Harmonium." Wallace Stevens. New York: Alfred A. Knopf. \$2.00.

writer. But his obscurity comes from a wealth of meaning and allusion which are unavoidable; and his intention, when we finally do fathom it, is far clearer and more earnestly pursued than theirs. He holds that the artist can do nothing else but select out of life the elements to form a "fictive" or fictitious reality. But this is not necessarily a higher reality; he is unable to take any moral category for granted. It is merely the artist's reality. And as such it becomes disintegrated against the banal, the ordinary, the commonplace, which is every-day reality. The result of this disintegration of the artist's personality is to be found in the poem which is entitled curiously, "The Comedian as the Letter C"; and the brief attainment of his ideal is detailed in the exquisite "To the One of Fictive Music." Despite his gallant attempt to guard his secret preoccupation with something more important than externals from the knowledge of the crowd, by the deliberate use of misleading titles, I make bold to say that Mr. Stevens is the most accomplished and not one of the least interesting of modern American poets. But for the future he must face a clear choice of evils: he must either expand his range to take in more of human experience, or give up writing altogether. "Harmonium" is a sublimation which does not permit of a sequel.

On the other hand, "The Pilgrimage of Festus" lacks interest precisely because it reveals, in slightly varied form, a method and an attitude which time has already staled and made familiar. Mr. Aiken, like Mr. Stevens, is one of the high priests of æstheticism; unfortunately he has gone on repeating the same mantric formula until all the meaning has gone out of it. He is interested in the play of unconscious psychology within the individual, and within man in general; but this play in itself has no other purport than its existence. In "Festus" we have all the apparatus which Mr. Aiken has skillfully employed in previous volumes: the symphonic movement, the repetition of dominant motive, the counterpoint of theme, the abuse of minor harmonics. We read on and on, our sensibilities are titillated, but we reach no conclusion about life, because the author is unable to draw any conclusion. We are still waiting for Mr. Aiken to make use of his considerable talents in the construction of a poem not dependent on associations of the sentimental order, but in which the associations are related in an intellectual proportion to each other, coinciding towards a mentally-fixed conclusion.

Mr. Kreymborg's new volume² betrays also signs of being affected by the prevailing vogue for æsthetic formulation. He has been attempting the more traditional forms, especially the sonnet. His experiments in this medium are interesting, but I think scarcely satisfying. In order to be successful to-day, the sonnet demands a degree of mental analysis and agility that Mr. Kreymborg scarcely possesses. He is far more himself and far more interesting when he gives a free range to his fantasy, in the loose, jerky rhythm with which he has already made us familiar; such poems as "Anti-Sunday Sermon," "Advertisement," "Monocles" reveal the unreformed and unrepentant ironist—the Heine of free verse—that Mr. Kreymborg is.

The next two books are frankly imitative. Mr. Louis Grudin³ is a follower of Mr. Bodenheim; Mr. Bellaman⁴ of Miss Lowell and H. D. Of the two,

Mr. Grudin has at least attempted the more difficult task. His is the attempt to catch impersonal irony in the net of a strangely disintegrated and awkwardly proportioned technique. The method fails utterly with him; it barely misses the most triumphant success with Mr. Bodenheim himself. Mr. Grudin's attempts at the sonnet-form ought to convince anyone that æsthetic satire can be successfully handled only in a form of the most academic strictness.

It is interesting to compare these books with Mr. Cournos's modest volume.⁵ I am not aware whether Mr. Cournos cares to be ranked as an American poet; at all events his poetry is subsidiary to his novels. But he has an unforced directness of utterance, a sincerity of purpose that compare favourably with the tortured conceits of many of these æsthetes. His work recalls H. D. and the earlier Aldington; but he adds a note of irony, of personal experience that is his own. One or two of his poems, such as "Nostalgia" and "The Contest," are sufficiently complete in themselves to induce a feeling of regret that he has abandoned poetry for the novel.

JOHN GOULD FLETCHER.

A BASHKIRTSEV OF OUR DAY.

In an old world where social rôles are cast with a certain inexorability many lives are lived interiorly, with little of the relief which may come in a new land where most of the inhabitants are up and doing. Marie Lenéru⁶ began early in life to think about herself and her states of mind, to search her conscience, and to live in a considerable measure through literature, native and foreign. Eugénie de Guérin and Marie Bashkirtsev are frequently in her mind and occasionally in her text. Her mental and moral state was largely qualified by her physical disabilities: her eyesight was poor for years, and she became completely deaf at seventeen. M. de Curel, who introduces her, acting at once as a friend of the family and as an established playwright, lays great stress on the deafness. Yet her troubles were social and psychical, rather than professional; they did not prevent her from establishing herself as a dramatic author. Though her career and her book alike felt the influences of her peculiar infirmity, it seldom receives any direct mention. The following brief reference is poignant:

There is no suffering more *inhuman* than deafness. A blind man can live through others. Matter disappears, contact is established from soul to soul; there is a drawing together. But as soon as speech disappears, beings become things. Distant, detached, difficult of access, they can do nothing for our happiness.

And there remains in the background the implication that love and marriage have been made more difficult.

In this country Mlle. Lenéru's career in the theatre will perhaps arouse a more definite interest than will much of her *journal intime*, which ran at intervals, through childhood and young womanhood, from 1887 until toward the end of the war. She came into notice with a play "Les Affranchis," which received a prize offered by a certain magazine and was then produced. Four or five others followed. On one of her later pages she names Curel as her "master." "Had I not read his plays," she declares, "nothing would have started." Her earlier influences were varied. At fifteen, she was the "literary daughter" of Père Lacordaire; at twenty-five, of Saint-Just and of Barrès. It was only at thirty that she found herself. She expressly repudiates Ibsen.

She mentions specifically two of Curel's plays written in

² "The Pilgrimage of Festus." Conrad Aiken. New York: Alfred A. Knopf. \$1.75.

³ "Less Lonely." Albert Kreymborg. New York: Harcourt, Brace and Co. \$2.00.

⁴ "Charlatan." Louis Grudin. New York: Lieber and Lewis. \$1.75.

⁵ "Cups of Illusion." Henry Bellaman. Boston: Houghton Mifflin Co. \$1.50.

⁶ "In Exile." John Cournos. New York: Boni & Liveright. \$1.50.

⁷ "Journal of Marie Lenéru." With an Introduction by François de Curel. Translated by William Aspenwall Bradley. New York: The Macmillan Company. \$2.50.

his prolific decade which ended with the last century: "L'Invitée" in which a mother is called, after many years, to make the acquaintance of her family; and "Le Repas du Lion" which deals with capital and labour. She might have mentioned also the well-known "Les Fossiles," dealing with pride of provincial nobility, and even more appositely "L'Envers d'une Sainte," which reveals the soul states of a *religieuse*. With regard to her own dramas, the "Journal" is sufficiently exegetical. Not that the simple-minded American theatre-goer will always follow her. She states that in "Les Affranchis" she had the "nostalgia of morality," and that the play possesses drama because, between hero and heroine, there is "equivalence." In "La Triomphatrice" there is again equivalence—the "excessive equivalence of a man and a woman," with the "superiority of the sanctions and of the realizations, perhaps, in the case of the woman." In "Le Mahdi" we are given the "exceptional gestures" of a heroic man, and his relations "not with his environment but with love." Here "the woman alone is found to have nothing to gain by this apotheosis of the man." These brief phrases will serve to denote the major preoccupations of the author. Other notations, technical as well as explicatory, are not absent; they serve to indicate what the serious French theatre, in its modern phases, may be—a temple with its own ritual, its own priestesses, its own odour of incense. Such an atmosphere requires, for certain natures and nostrils, some degree of clarification. The author has not always provided this; and neither has the translator.

As Marie Lenéru's life went on there was a weakening of devotional feeling and of belief; and with the progress of the war her literary interests gave way in part to the claims of current actualities. The girl who began with Lacordaire and Shelley lived on to feel deep concern over Woodrow Wilson and H. G. Wells. As pacifist, feminist and writer, she had much to say that was frank and earnest, before death took her some six weeks preceding the armistice.

HENRY B. FULLER.

MR. VAN LOON'S BIBLE.

"THE STORY OF THE BIBLE"¹ by Mr. Hendrik van Loon is a typical product of our age, of an age which demands that every aspect of life should be interpreted in its own superficial terms. It has come to this pass that even the Bible itself, that greatest monument of human imagination, must be popularized so that its poetical and terrible secrets may become as familiar to conventional and Philistine minds as a Ford car or a radio-apparatus. As one turns over the pages of this new version of the ancient book one feels not only as if the Holy of Holies had once more been invaded but as if Mr. van Loon, in spite of his temerity, in spite of his facility with pen and crayon, had completely failed in conveying to his readers any real sense of that religious awe which has haunted the minds of men for a hundred generations. Indeed we might well have predicted that considerably more than the arch quill of a journalist would be required if those august secrets which lie hidden behind the veil of the Temple were to be revealed.

When one considers the extraordinary imaginative suggestiveness of the old biblical tales as presented to us in the Authorized Version, one's indignation can not but be roused at such an unseemly attempt to bring literature up to date. The Homeric simplicity of the patriarchal days, the pomp of Egypt, the tragic splendour of Saul, the glory of Solomon, and the artless beauty of the narrative of the New Testament, all are subjected to a cheapening process at the hands of a writer who continually proves himself entirely lacking in that ordinary refinement of feeling which in every other epoch than

ours has generally been considered necessary to salvation.

This book may, as the author claims, be primarily written for boys, but it also very obviously is meant to appeal to adult people, to rational-minded business men in fact, who wish to be made to feel as much at home with the Bible as they are with the *Saturday Evening Post*. The kind of humour displayed in the illustrations is identical with the kind of humour that makes the comic sheets of the daily papers such coveted reading. In its essence it is the humour of irreverence: the humour of a superficial, supercilious mind that takes a singular satisfaction in rendering the everyday incidents of life ludicrous and contemptible. Let any sensitive person who has respect for the poetry of the Bible, for the poetry of existence, open this book and inspect the two drawings entitled "Joseph is Proud of His New Coat" and "The Road to Golgotha," and see if he does not feel that an unpardonable offence has been committed against his own æsthetic appreciations, and, in so far as the Bible expresses the deepest feelings of man, against the noble and tragic dignity of human experience.

The same indecorous humour flickers through the text also; the same tendency to raise a smile by an unexpected juxtaposition of antique and modern associations. We know how we in our childhood, and our fathers before us, and the old men before them, have been stirred by the story of David's playing on his harp to relieve the melancholy of the proud, dark-hearted king. Mr. van Loon feels no compunction in referring to David's music as a "concert." In describing how Moses struggled with the obdurate Pharaoh he writes as follows: "Moses made an end to the pestilent visitation of the flies, and Pharaoh, glad to be rid of the nightmare, disregarded his promise as soon as the last fly *had been shooed out of his dining-room*." Could any facetiousness be more vulgar than that? Again he describes Goliath as being "big as a house." Of the end of Nebuchadnezzar he writes: "He imagined that he had become an animal. He went around on all fours *and moored*, and died miserably in a field, where he had been eating grass, *like any ordinary cow*." By the deliberate use of the petty phraseology of suburbia he successfully reduces the story of the birth of John the Baptist from its ancient dignity: "But behold one day Mary heard from Elizabeth. There was to be a baby in the family, and could Mary come and take care of her kinswoman? for there was a lot of work to be done and Elizabeth needed a little attention." The Holy Family is treated in the same "amusing" manner: "Joseph no longer lived, but Mary cleverly kept her small household together and the children could always return to their old home whenever *they needed a vacation*." And so the book continues to the end. We are told that Jerusalem in the latter days became "a religious tourist centre," and that after the crucifixion half the world was set agog by the "*terrible new slogan* 'Love your neighbour.'"

It is a volume that will no doubt please many readers in America to-day. It may possibly offend a few old-fashioned, simple people by its obvious scepticism; and because of its abominable bad taste it will undoubtedly outrage that small minority who still care for what is fine and distinguished in literature.

LLEWELYN POWYS.

THE LOG OF A 'FORTY-NINER.

A CONNECTING link between the life shown in Samuel Morison's "Maritime History of Massachusetts" and the life of the pioneers of "The Covered Wagon" is supplied in "The Log of a 'Forty-Niner."¹ Richard L. Hale was a Yankee who still looked out on the sea. He reached

¹ "The Story of the Bible." Hendrik van Loon. New York: Boni and Liveright. \$5.00.

¹ "The Log of a 'Forty-Niner." Richard L. Hale. Edited from original manuscripts by Carolyn Hale Russ. Boston: B. J. Brimmer Co. \$4.00.

Oregon and California on the New-England-built brig "General Worth," sailing from Newburyport and rounding Cape Horn. He got to the gold-fields of San Francisco, but he struck no gold. He escaped from the fighting Indians, and upon the flower-studded plains he listened to a pioneer tell how the wealth of southern California could be most quickly exploited. "Knee-deep we waded through billows of blossoms, while birds as glowing in plumage as the petals of a flower flitted above us, but no song, no clear sweet bird-notes came from their dainty throats." "There's money in this," exclaims the pioneer who is beside him. "Better than gold-dust—shipping these seeds East; I have my method too. When the seeds are ripe, the birds, the first reapers, will have full-stored crops and will be fat and lazy and easily caught. Then take out their crops and dry them. When they are thoroughly dried, sew 'em up, and send the full crops to the market. By this method the very best seeds will be secured, for the birds select only the largest and best, and reject the hollow and worthless ones."

The writer of this passage leaves us between the Melville of "Omoo" and the Mark Twain of "Roughing It." If this yarn had been merely the log of a 'forty-niner, if it had merely to do with prospecting in California and Oregon, it would be lacking in savour. But Hale turned back from California to Peru, and he saw things there that were almost as wonderful as anything that Sindbad the Sailor looked on. He saw the drowned city of Callao, the city that had been submerged through the earthquake and the tidal wave of 1746. "I could plainly see vaults and unroofed walls, with floors thickly strewn with what looked like human bones . . . As we retraced our steps, my guide pointed to a spot where it was believed that the golden gates of the great cathedral were buried." This New Englander had a boyish enthusiasm that made him delight in a visit to the Island of Juan Fernandez. But he becomes a romantic when he writes of what he saw in Peru. "I saw the walls of Callao lying beneath the waters of the bay, and the masts of a sunken vessel breaking the sod of a firmly-growing grass plot." From Callao he went to the Chinchas, and there the gold-seeker strove to dig up the wealth that was in the excrement of birds; and well indeed does he bring that odd and undescribed part of the world before us—rocks without a tree or a leaf, a flower or a blade of grass, where the birds make their nests out of the guano deposit, tier over tier, nest over nest of guano. He describes, too, the life of the place, at once filthy and savage; the ugly booby birds, the sea-lions, "breaking the face of the sea with mouths filled with fish in an easy catch," and the fearsome human beings who exploited this wilderness of filth, Peruvians who drove Chinese coolies so cruelly that often the unfortunate labourers threw themselves into the sea. "It was horrible to see these abandoned dead, a battlefield would be less gruesome, I believe, for at some time the opposing sides had an equal chance for life, but here there was only the taskmaster and his victim." The guano islands (altogether unexploited for literary purposes) come before us with the memorableness that is in Sindbad's monstrous adventures; when this New Englander writes about the guano with its dust and stench, the gluttonous sea-monsters, the sharp cries of its songless birds, the islands' lack of all vegetable life, and the cruelties of the taskmasters who mine in the filth. "It seemed as though nature had dumped the nuisance here to rid herself of it." The writer came back to New England without having handled any of the gold of California. It seems odd to us in these over-published days that no editor or publisher came to him for the manuscript of adventures that are told with simplicity, earnestness, good heartedness, and, occasionally, with what might be termed a reserved eloquence.

PADRAIC COLUM.

AFRICAN TRIBAL LIFE.

THE life of the native Africans is rarely thought of as closely integrated, with laws and law-courts, kings and dynasties, overlords and serfs, careful economic systems and standards of value, priests and stated rituals; just as the continent itself is rarely conceived of as containing vast steppes and snow-covered mountains as well as jungle and desert. Indeed, it is with a shock of surprise that one realizes the complexity of these Negro civilizations; it is so completely unexpected, and there are to be found so many points of resemblance to our own culture.

The two volumes which constitute the initial portion of the report of the Mackaye Expedition to Central Africa¹ will give the reader an excellent picture of life in this region. The author, Mr. Roscoe, has already published two important ethnographic works; one on the Baganda, and another which is a brief study of the tribes here discussed at length. No one could have been better fitted to conduct this expedition, for Mr. Roscoe has lived for years as missionary and student among the peoples of whom he writes. He is conversant with their language, so that he was able to obtain most of his information from the old men of the tribe who neither speak nor understand English. These peoples live in the region west and north-west of the lake Victoria Nyanza. The country is high and unforested, and makes ideal grazing ground for cattle. It may be said that cattle are to them what the dollar is to us, and even more. There are two main groups in the population, the herders and the agricultural people. The former represent the conquerors of the country, and in earlier times no intermarriage was permitted between them and the original inhabitants who tilled the ground. The aristocracy is composed of these cattle-keepers; the king is the supreme herdsman. Symbolically he must tend his herd every day in his sacred enclosure; when he drinks his milk every one must kneel, nor must any sound be made on pain of death; he is the owner of all the cattle, and the chiefs are mere keepers of what is his. The upper classes, until recently, were allowed to eat no vegetable food; while every boy of this class, from the king's sons down, is obliged to learn how to care for the beloved animals. Each cow has its name and responds to it, and the taboos which surround every move of the herds are innumerable.

Among these peoples, rank is a matter of great importance. The sons of the king used to fight for the throne at the death of their father; the mother and the wife of the ruler have their separate courts just as he has his. The chiefs must keep in constant communication with their ruler, as their subordinates must keep them informed of what is happening in their provinces. Each official is a judge, and his decisions are enforced, although appeal may be taken finally to the king, who constitutes the court of last resort. Specialized work, such as extracting salt, making pots or woodwork, or smelting iron, is done by distinct classes, who carry on a brisk trade in their products, selling them for sheep, goats or cowrie-shells. The diet of the herders is almost exclusively meat and milk, and it is curious that among them we find a custom similar to that of the orthodox Jews: meat and milk may not be eaten together—indeed, some hours must elapse between the consumption of the two.

The political organization of these peoples is reminiscent of that of feudal times, while the absoluteness with which the king reigns is remarkable. His spear is always at hand, and it is used freely on persons who disturb him. This lightness with which life is regarded, while not as great as among the neighbouring Baganda, still manifests

¹"The Report of the Mackaye Ethnological Expedition to Central Africa." Part I, The Bakitara or Banyoro. Part II, The Banyankole. John Roscoe. Cambridge: The University Press.

itself in the number of occasions on which human sacrifice is demanded. Most sacrifices, however, are either of cattle among the herders, or of goats or chickens among the agricultural people. These animals are also used as dowries. The women do not have a hard life. It is thought to be desirable for them to remain fat, as this is supposed to contribute to the well-being of the cattle, and the only work they do is to wash and fumigate the milk-vessels. Among the agricultural classes, however, the women work hard in the fields.

It is unfortunate that the entire report is presented in the past tense; while it is true that many of these customs are being broken down by the advent of European civilization and the British rifle and missionary, many remain; yet the reader is led to regard the account as one of a prehistoric people. The defects of the work, however, are more than balanced by the full treatment of the economic, social and ceremonial life of the people, though it would have made the reports much more vivid if literal translations had been given of some of the ceremonial rituals. Most studies of African tribes are so loosely written that these constitute a striking exception, and stand out even among the few to which the interested student may turn for careful and reliable information.

MELVILLE J. HERSKOVITS.

SHORTER NOTICES.

MR. ARNOLD BENNETT'S latest novel¹ has been heralded by many as a return to the ample simplicity of his two earlier novels, "The Old Wives' Tale" and "Clayhanger." Whether or not Mr. Bennett has in reality stopped boiling the pot at last and returned to the doubtful immortality conceded by contemporary critics is, however, quite beside our immediate concern. One is always inclined to be wary of the popular hue and cry to the effect that this our beloved writer was dead and is alive again, was lost and is found. While reading "Riceyman Steps" one is vividly aware of certain disconcerting shortcomings on the author's part. Mr. Bennett does not see life whole; his seriousness is not high; his portrayals are neither compassionate nor dispassionate; he approaches life with his tongue in his cheek. On the other hand, he displays a shrewd appraisal of character, a keen eye for detail, a loose, garrulous method of discourse, which makes his novel extremely readable. If there is much sentimentality in the portrayal of the servant girl, Elsie, there is much fine sentiment in the picture of the miserly bookseller and the widow, Mrs. Arb, whom he married only that both might die from undernourishment lest the stock of gold sovereigns in the safe be depleted; and if there is too much of Mr. Bennett's obnoxious habit of giving his characters his left hand while he stabs them with his right, there is nevertheless a great deal of genuine humour, irony and pathos. E. S.

PUPPETS have not been wholly successful in establishing themselves in America. Paladins have come from Sicily and have clashed their way in shining armour through the old-time matter of Ariosto and Tasso; or, with more of variety and sophistication, from Rome; and occasional brief seasons have presented marionettes of American provenance. Yet, on the whole, our audiences, with their disposition to stress personality and to demand a measure of biographical interest in their entertainments, have not been consistently responsive. Perhaps such a book as Miss Anderson's² may further the cause. It brings together virtually everything that has been done or written about puppetry—more particularly in a bibliography which has the caption, "Patrons and Patronesses." Says the author: "Back through the ages I have tracked the puppets, for to know the history of these tiny actors is to know the whole history of the drama, and that is the history of all the peoples in the world." Miss Anderson professes to have produced a book for children of all ages, from six to sixty. The children of six will recognize a kind of fluttery feminin-

ity in diction and handling, akin to that often employed by the enraptured kindergartner. The children of sixty, for the sake of much sound and interesting material, will adjust themselves to this manner as best they may. In such a fashion are told at length several stories that "every child should know"; such as those of "Punch," Dr. Faust, Saint George, "The Loves of the Three Oranges," the tale of a Japanese Romeo and Juliet, and the like. The volume is enlivened with much music and verse, and with many pictures by the author herself. Some of these deal with the technique of the art; others, in colour, present its poetic possibilities.

H. B. F.

THE dean of the School of Literary Arts, Washington, D. C., who is also instructor in short-story writing in the University of Maryland, is plainly exercised over the sad state of the American short story. He has discovered³ that magazine-editors are addicted to the happy ending, that they insist upon optimism in theme and cheerfulness in treatment, and he is afraid that their attitude is fostering an era of "great talent forced to decay, of great sincerity diluted and polluted, of noble fires extinguished." This state of things, moreover, he lays partially at the door of college instruction in the craft of fiction, which, in endeavouring to supply the market, steers the steam-roller over budding genius. "I know my hands are not without stain of literary blood," he writes. A great many of the things which Professor Fagin says are true. In fact, they are truisms. But merely being sad about them will not contribute to their solution, and it seems that the author has nothing else to offer. Instead of washing his hands, he wrings them. He is, perhaps, a little too impressed with the possibilities of the classroom. One can not quite accept his conviction that genius is being blotted out in semesters; creative talent is of tougher fibre than that. Professor Fagin wants to know whether short-story writing is to be an art or a trade. Its salvation is that it can be—and is—either one.

L. B.

THE last play in Mr. Clements's collection, "Plays for a Folding Theatre,"⁴ has a classic quality that might render the impressionistic critic unfair to the merits of the others. In "Moontide" we have a first-rate piece of dramatic writing. The two thugs, isolated in the rickety waterside cabin with their sense of guilt and their terror of the sea which is so soon to blot out everything, their crime, their victim, their shelter, their very lives, are of those large dimensions which transcend the individual and fashion a symbol of all humanity. It is as though the men themselves, sharply and vividly defined, cast shadows of appalling size, whereon are portrayed all the fears that have dogged the hapless race through the ages. The spirit is, indeed, wholly Greek. However realistic the setting and the characters, it is the Fates who are at work; they are there at the beginning and the end. Mr. Clements has introduced just enough of this *motif* to lift the play above flat realism without abstracting the physical drama of the situation. To become wholly preoccupied with this one work, however, would do injustice to the diversity of Mr. Clements's talents. In "Pierrot in Paris" we find the combination of light comedy and symbol which has made memorable, to a few at least, that extraordinary and little known collection of one-act plays by Henry Fuller, "The Puppet Booth." How seldom do our writers take advantage of this effective contrast, the artistic commingling of two atmospheres, of the Here and Nowhere, as Miss Lowell would say. Again, in "The Siege," out of a milieu authentically Oriental, emerge those universal emotions which can only be portrayed, as in this case, by an intensely individual personification. "The Three Lepers of Suk-el-Garab" reveals the same largeness of conception. That the young dramatist has departed from this method to express sentimentality rather than emotion in two of his plays is the more to be regretted because of the unhappy contrast they present to the others. "Moontide" alone would make this volume memorable. The three or four other plays which almost attain to a like beauty show clearly that this work is not a happy accident but a milestone in the career of an artist.

R. S. H.

¹"Riceyman Steps." Arnold Bennett. New York: George H. Doran Company. \$2.00.

²"The Heroes of the Puppet Stage." Madge Anderson. New York: Harcourt, Brace & Co. \$3.00.

³"Short Story Writing." N. Bryllion Fagin. New York: Thomas Seltzer. \$1.50.

⁴"Plays for a Folding Theatre." Colin Campbell Clements. Cincinnati: Stewart Kidd Company. \$2.00.

CONGRESS is back doing business at the old stand ("At it again, aggera-water!"); the British election is over; the French keep on paying for the privilege of preventing the collection of reparations; the Germans continue to steer groggily between various Scyllas and Charybdises; castor-oil still lubricates Italy's sword; Russia seems to cling to the notion that she has had a successful revolution and, all in all, progress in politics and political thinking seems to be limping along on three cylinders.

Nothing new about that, is there? Happily, the FREEMAN's course is only slightly affected by those matters which newspapers report conspicuously. Its minimization of political news, except in so far as current comment serves to disclose the futility of legislators and statesmen for purposes of a civilization fit for free men to live in, is justified by events.

The FREEMAN likes to think that it is partly responsible for the increasing number of citizens who refuse to be buncoed by political confidence-men. It is not only an enlarged circle of readers that permits us to draw such an inference; our subscribers' letters convince us that more and more people are thinking for themselves, and along lines that would make politicians apprehensive of the future if politicians had time for anything but politics. Our optimism does not take the form of announcing that the millennium is at hand or that enlightenment is rampant in the land: we believe, merely, that the FREEMAN tends to restore and preserve the equilibrium of a people who, misled, have become intellectually volsteady.

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